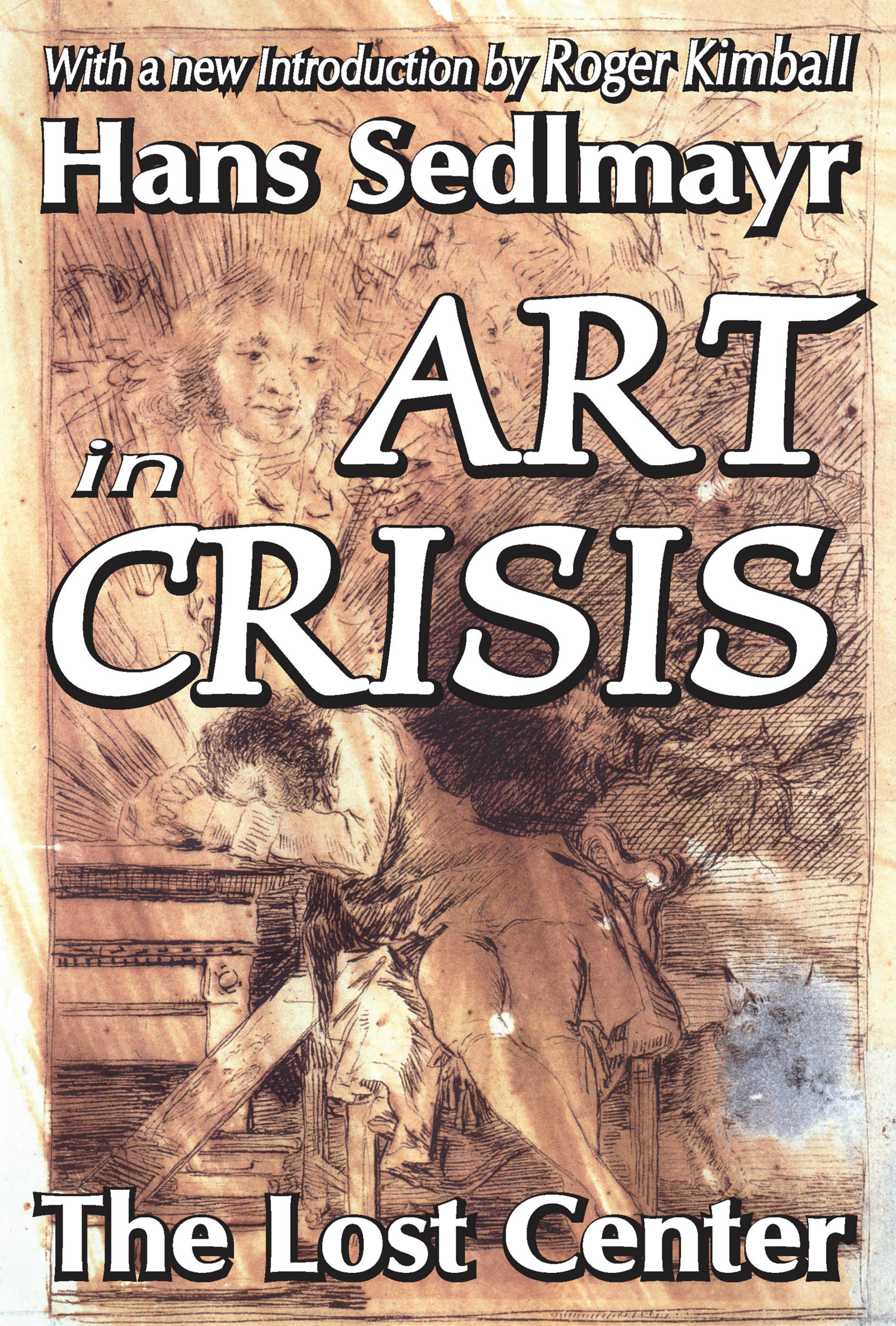
With a new Introduction by Roger Kimball

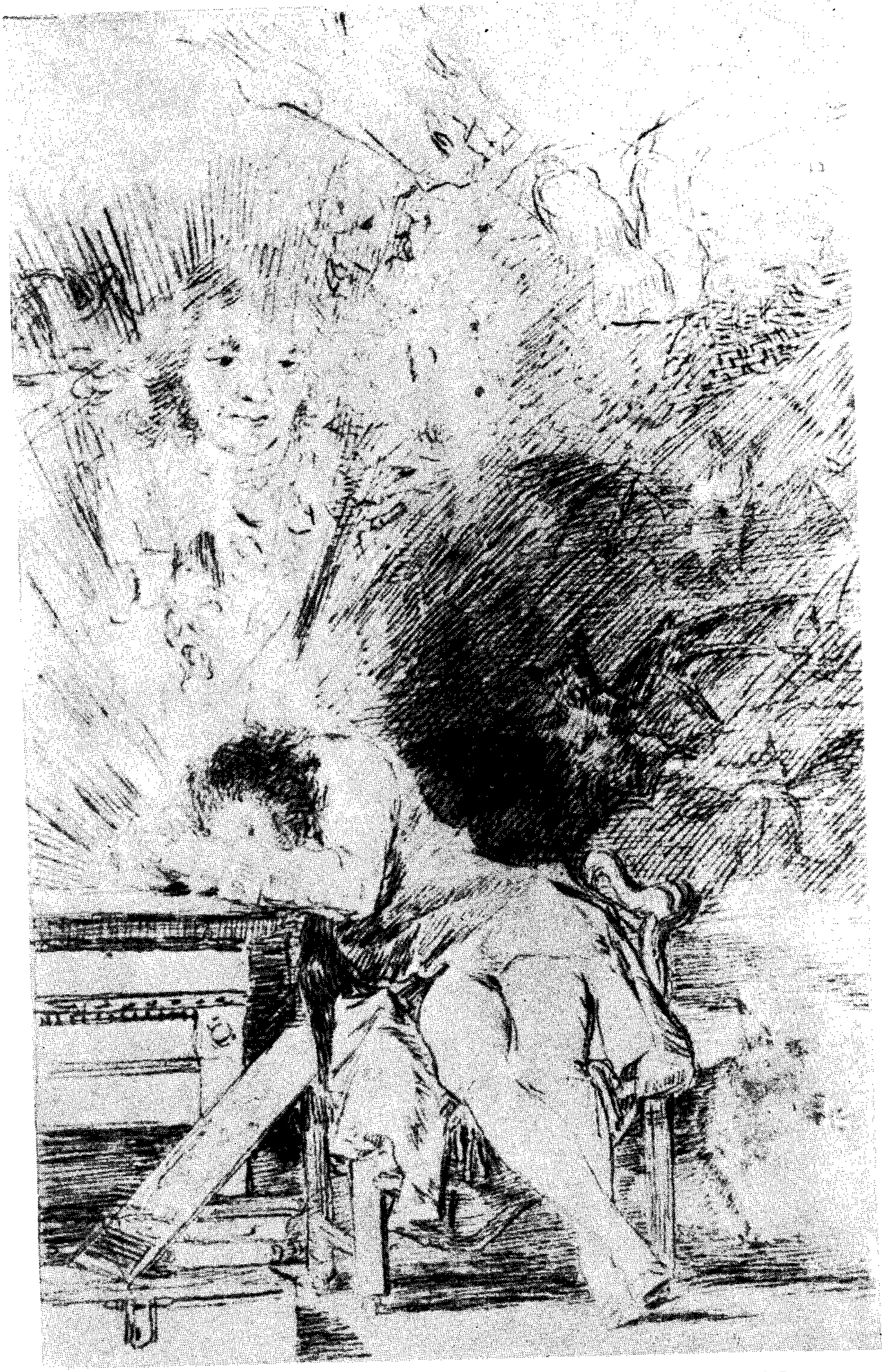
Hans Sedlmayr

ART in CRISIS

The Lost Center



ART in CRISIS



GOYA: DRAWING FOR TITLE PAGE OF *LOS CAPRICHOS*
'When reason dreams, monsters are born.' (*See page* 141.)

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Hans Sedlmayr

ART *in* CRISIS

The Lost Center

Translated by Brian Battershaw

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Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold...
W. B. Yeats

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INTRODUCTION TO THE TRANSACTION EDITION

> [Today] we find a pursuit of illusions of artistic progress, of personal peculiarity, of "the new style," of "unsuspected possibilities," theoretical babble, pretentious fashionable artists, weight-lifters with cardboard dumb-bells. . . . What do we possess today as "art"? A faked music, filled with artificial noisiness of massed instruments; a failed painting, full of idiotic, exotic and showcard effects, that every ten years or so concocts out of the form-wealth of millennia some new "style" which is in fact no style at all since everyone does as he pleases. . . . We cease to be able to date anything within centuries, let alone decades, by the language of its ornamentation. So it has been in the Last Act of all Cultures.
>
> —Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*

> Beauty is the battlefield where God and the devil war for the soul of man.
>
> —Fyodor Dostoyevski, *The Brothers Karamazov*

Among the more remarkable books I first encountered in graduate school was a blistering polemic called (in English) *Art in Crisis: The Lost Center*. It was already long out of print—and more's the pity. There is nothing else quite like it in the annals of conservative cultural speculation. The author was Hans Sedlmayr, an Austrian art and architectural historian whose primary field of expertise was Baroque architecture. Sedlmayr (1896–1984) was a founding member of the "New Vienna School" of art historians, a group that flourished in the late 1920s and 1930s and included Fritz Novotny and Otto Pächt (whose book *The Practice of Art History* [1] is a neglected classic). Their chief intellectual inspiration was another Austrian, Alois Riegl (1858–1905), whose idea of *Kunstwollen*—"art will" or "art impulse"[2]—was one of those omnivorous explanatory concepts that set susceptible academic hearts beating faster for two or three generations. Riegl believed that there was an intrinsic evolutionary logic to the development of artistic styles, one whose career (or careers) he and his successors proposed to trace and ruminate about.

It was a fertile idea—fertile, anyway, in the production of papers and books. Sedlmayr edited a collection of Riegl's essays in 1929 and, in 1931, published an essay called "Zu einer strengen Kunstwissenschaft"—"Toward a Rigorous Study of Art"[3]—which distinguished between two approaches to the study of art. The first, empirical, approach focused on such pedestrian issues as provenance, chronology, influence, and patronage. The second, more exciting, approach endeavored to ride the wave of the *Kunstwollen,* to intuit the "inner organization" of the work of art. Both approaches, Sedlmayr said, were necessary to the discipline of art history, but the second (surprise, surprise) was "more 'essential' and more 'valuable' than the first."

Many art historians wondered how "rigorous" Sedlmayr's new approach really was. For example, in "The New Viennese School"[4] (1936), Meyer Schapiro acknowledged the "intensity and intelligence" that Sedlmayr and his colleagues brought to the table, but he also complained about Sedlmayr's use of "spiritualistic conceptions and . . . allusions to qualities or causes that we have no means of verifying." Moreover, Schapiro objected, Sedlmayr unfairly deprecated the usual procedures of art history: "Anyone who has investigated with real scruple a problem of art history knows how difficult it often is to establish even a simple fact beyond question." Schapiro scored some palpable hits, above all, perhaps, in his observation that the new Vienners sometimes tended to substitute their discovered "principles" or "structures" for the "work itself." (An objection to which many art historians, Schapiro included, might profitably attend.)

I knew nothing of Sedlmayr's other work when reading *Art in Crisis*—his highly regarded book on Francesco Borromini's churches, for example. Nor did I know that Sedlmayr had joined the fledgling Nazi party in Austria as early as 1932, a moment when the party was still outlawed. Sedlmayr was not a committed Nazi. But he did not behave honorably. He kept and flourished in his job during Hitler's rise and throughout the war while Jewish colleagues, including his friend Pächt, lost their positions and (those that were lucky) had to flee the country. Still, Sedlmayr was never a party ideologue in the sense, for example, that Martin Heidegger was. His association with the toxin of Nazism was close enough that he lost his academic position after the war, not close enough to be prosecuted by the OSS. Christopher Wood, editor of *The Vienna School Reader* (2003), exhibits a marked distaste for Sedlmayr and what he calls his "bombastic, hectoring, even devious" tone. But Wood acknowledges that Sedlmayr was inspired not by political animus—he was, Wood says, "no revolutionary"—but by "bourgeois and Catholic nostalgia for the Old Europe, the Hapsburg *Mitteleuropa,* that he had known as a child."[5]

Art in Crisis was published in Germany in 1948 under the title *Verlust der Mitte: Die bildende Kunst des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts als Symptom und Symbol der Zeit:* "Loss of the Center: The Fine Arts of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries as Symptom and Symbol of the Times." The German title is better, or at any rate is a more accurate guide to the book's real subject, than "Art in Crisis." Sedlmayr certainly did believe that modern art was in crisis. But in his view the artistic crisis was only a coefficient or manifestation of a much deeper cultural and religious disintegration. In an important sense, *Verlust der Mitte* is not an exercise in art history at all. It *uses* art, not to make an aesthetic case but in order to illustrate a moral diagnosis. His epigraph—from Yeats's poem "The Second Coming"—presages the book's governing mood: "Things fall apart; the center cannot hold . . ."

In the decade between its original publication and its appearance in English in 1957, *Verlust der Mitte* sold 100,000 copies in Germany and Austria alone. In America, it bombed utterly. In 1996, Stephen J. Tonsor spoke at an event honoring Henry Regnery, who published *Art in Crisis.* [6] Tonsor estimated that the book, which he described as "one of the post-war's most important art-historical discussions and criticisms of artistic modernism," sold "about 250 copies in the United States." Tonsor may be off by a few hundred: no matter, the book in English encountered some hostility but mostly neglect.

No doubt Sedlmayr's connection with the Nazis was part of the reason. For example, in a tart, contemptuous, review in *Commentary,* Alfred Werner charged that Sedlmayr's diction was "more reminiscent of Streicher's newspaper, *Der Stürmer,* than serious art history."[7] I do not believe Werner's characterization was fair. If it were, then the rhetoric of moral disapprobation would be forever out of bounds in discussing art. In 1937, the Nazis mounted a show of modernist art and called it "Degenerate Art." They were wrong about the art, but does that mean we are henceforth forbidden from describing any art as "degenerate"? Consider the photographs in Robert Mapplethorpe's notorious "X Portfolio": would "degenerate" be out of place in describing them? Sedlmayr does not, I believe, use the infamous term *"entartete"* ("degenerate") but he freely employs terms from the same lexicon, speaking throughout his book of breakdown, chaos, negation, decline. (A typical section is titled "The Chaos of Total Decay.")

In any event, Sedlmayr's discreditable political history was not, I think, the main reason for the failure of *Art in Crisis* in the court of public opinion. The more important reason was his attack on modernism, indeed on modernity itself. Christopher Wood speaks of Sedlmayr's "antimodernist tirade," dismissing *Art in Crisis* as "a neo-Spenglerian, pessimistic, anti-intellectual assault on modern art."

The idea that an incisive, encyclopedic mind such as Sedlmayr's is "anti-intellectual" is the sort of preposterous thought that could only occur to a certain type of intellectual. But Wood is right about the neo-Spenglerian cast of *Art in Crisis.* Spengler's lowering two-volume masterpiece *Der Untergang des Abendlandes,* "The Decline of the West," had mesmerized the post-World War I intelligentsia. (The first volume appeared in 1918, the second in 1922.) Sedlmayr quotes Spengler incessantly. The narrative he presents in *Art in Crisis* assumes rather than argues for Spengler's view of cultural development as a centuries-spanning organic process of youth-maturity-senescence. Sedlmayr also accepts much (though by no means all) of Spengler's seductive interpretations of cultural significances, in particular his understanding of nineteenth-century eclecticism as a symptom of decay. Indeed, the whole realm of medicalized rhetoric—"symptom," "diagnosis," "disease," "prognosis"—is a Spenglerian trope that Sedlmayr adopts wholesale. (It is from Spengler, by the way, not the Nazis, that he takes his vocabulary of decline.)

Where Sedlmayr departs from Spengler most importantly is on the issue of inevitability. For Spengler, the "organic" cultural developments he chronicles are *necessary* processes. The "phases" of civilization he describes are the product not of human ingenuity but of the operation of "Destiny," "Fate," or some other ineluctable, uppercase inevitability: a force that is as irresistible as it is impersonal and supra-human. Sedlmayr, too, is fond of "phases." *Art in Crisis* is full of them: a section called "From the Liberation of Art to the Negation of Art," for example, traces four phases of the "disease," from 1770 to 1900 and after. Later in the book, he denominates modern art the "fourth phase" of artistic development, a phase devoted above all to the pursuit of artistic and spiritual autonomy. But Sedlmayr softens Spengler's analysis by admitting a place for human initiative. A late chapter carries an epigraph from Christian Morgenstern: "We are at the end . . ." A gloomy thought, though Sedlmayr embraces that ellipsis as an opportunity, not a declaration. "It may be a somewhat questionable proceeding to designate one's own age as the turning- point in history," he admits,

> nevertheless it is difficult to shake off the feeling that since 1900 a kind of limit has been reached and that we are faced by something wholly without precedent. Beyond this limit it is difficult to imagine anything except one of two things—total catastrophe or the beginnings of regeneration.

The possibility of humanly directed "regeneration" sounds a distinctly un- (even anti-) Spenglerian note. It is what ultimately rescues Sedlmayr's astringent analysis from Wood's charge of Spenglerian pessimism.

Not, I hasten to add, that the picture Sedlmayr paints is cheerful. *Art in Crisis* is primarily a contribution to the library of conservative reaction to the intoxications of the Enlightenment, especially in its French—which is to say, in its extreme, egalitarian, revolutionary—modality. The Enlightenment came bearing the promise of universal emancipation. The promise turned rancid. In the second volume of *The Decline of the West,* Spengler observed that "Every 'Age of Enlightenment' proceeds from an unlimited optimism of the reason . . . to an equally unqualified scepticism." [8] Sedlmayr doesn't quote that passage, but in the final pages of *Art in Crisis* he cites Nietzsche to similar effect: "Enlightenment is always followed by a darkening of men's souls and a pessimistic coloring of life. Towards 1770 (!) you can already note a lessening of joy." Sedlmayr interpolates an exclamation point to underscore the historical marker. He opens *Art in Crisis* by observing that in the years before 1789, "there began a revolution the extent which was vast, perhaps more vast than we can imagine." The revolution in question was not the political revolution wrought by Robespierre and his colleagues but the "huge inner catastrophe" of which the political detonations were merely a part. "There can be no doubt," Sedlmayr writes with typical portentousness, "that many people really feel that this our age is sick." It is part of his task to show how many disturbing features of our culture that we think of as distinctively modern actually have roots in the nineteenth and even eighteenth centuries.

At bottom, we might best describe *Art in Crisis* as an exercise in cultural or spiritual epidemiology. Sedlmayr's goal is "to interpret," to draw a fever chart of the modern age "through the language of art." But he regards art in this book less as an aesthetic reality than as an exfoliation of spiritual aspiration. This makes *Art in Crisis* a difficult book to classify. It is not really art criticism, though it frequently passes judgment on various works. Nor is it art history, though it draws freely on that discipline. Indeed, Sedlmayr insists *Art in Crisis* is not "in any sense . . . concerned with the history of art as such." He describes it rather as a " 'critique' of the spirit and an attempt to diagnose the age both in its greatness and its wretchedness, as that age is revealed to us in its art." Sedlmayr occasionally dilates on some achievement of modernity, but it is the "wretchedness" that sets his pen moving. Nor is this surprising. It is partly due to the fact that bad news generally makes the most piquant copy. But there is also the contention that failure is more indicative of cultural drift than success. Sedlmayr agrees with the architectural historian Auguste Choisy that "Ce sont les abus qui caractérisent le mieux les tendances": "It is the abuses that are the best indicators of trends."

In some ways, *Art in Crisis* is a book that was written too early. Sedlmayr focuses more attention on painting than sculpture because, he says, "A meaningless form in sculpture is always in danger of being merely ridiculous." Well, yes, but will it be *seen* as ridiculous? What, one wonders, would Sedlmayr have to say about the work of Carl Andre and his tile-like squares of metal? It is true that much of the absurdity that we see in the art world today is but a tired rehash of absurdities that surfaced in Surrealism, Futurism, and Dada. Whatever else can be said about them, artists like Duchamp and Dalì really did achieve a limit that cannot be surpassed, merely recapitulated along a spectrum that starts in naïveté and ends in irony, parody, and camp. Dalì defined Surrealism as "the systematization of confusion." Louis Aragon said it was "the child of raving and darkness"—he meant that as praise—and noted that, far from being merely an art movement, it aspired to be "all-embracing" and sought "transformation of the whole of life." Really, Sedlmayr wrote, Surrealism should be called "sous-realism," since it deals chiefly not with elements that transcend expression but which precede it in the inarticulate basement of life. Surrealism is important not because of its aesthetic achievements but because it is "a movement that unites a number of the basic tendencies of modern art—the love of the illogical, the receptivity for the chaotic, faithfulness in representation together with an icy coldness of finish." With Surrealism, as the art historian Wilhelm Pindar pointed out, "art finally reaches the stage where it is concerned not with that which is beyond the power of language to express but with that which is inexpressible because it is so far below it." What, one wonders, would writers like Sedlmayr and Pindar say about contemporary artists like Gilbert and George, the Chapman brothers, Matthew Barney?

Sedlmayr admits that his approach is "somewhat sweeping." But he argues that behind the seemingly chaotic multiplicity of modern artistic expression may be discerned "mighty trends." *Art in Crisis* is an effort to catalogue and assess the meaning of those trends. Sedlmayr pauses now and again to note (as he puts it in his introduction) "the limitations of the thesis." It would, he admits, be mistaken to consider works of art *"exclusively* as symptoms of mental disorder." He insists, however, that it would also be mistaken to consider works of art *"exclusively* as examples and transitory points in the development of a style, as the criticism of art on purely stylistic grounds."

Consider, for example, Claude Nicolas Ledoux's idea of building a house in the shape of a huge sphere. In 1770, Ledoux designed such an edifice (probably then unbuildable) for a bailiff. "Most people," Sedlmayr writes, "have treated this notion as nothing more than a bad joke or a very ordinary piece of lunacy, while the more charitable have looked upon it as an 'experiment with form.' The thing is certainly insane enough, but if it were no more than that, we should hardly be justified in wasting much time over it."

According to Sedlmayr, however, Ledoux's plan is not simply a bold aesthetic jeu d'esprit. It "is a symptom of a profound crisis both in architecture and in the whole life of the human spirit." Why? Because, Sedlmayr says, Ledoux's fantasy is part of a larger effort to deny the traditional rootedness of architecture (and of man): it is a rewriting of architecture in the abstract language of geometry. A sphere, resting upon the ground at but a single point, lacks a foundation; top and bottom are inter-changeable, or rather are obliterated; its measure is not the needs and limitations of the human body—the traditional measure of architecture—but the fancy of the unfet-tered imagination. It is in this sense that "a nonsensical idea"—a house in the shape of a sphere—"need by no means be wholly without significance." Sedlmayr reads off—sometimes he reads into—the extravagances of modern artistic expression the spiritual itinerary of the age.

Sedlmayr offers a similar interpretation of the advent and spread of the English landscape garden, one of the several new "master problems" that defined the artistic activity of the eighteenth century. Beginning in about 1720, he points out, the English garden, a "conscious protest against the architectural gardens of France," swept through Europe in a fit of what one nobleman, who had twice ruined himself in an effort to transform his property into a nature preserve, called "Parkomania." What—if anything—should we make of this phenomenon? According to Sedlmayr, it betokened "something much more than a new kind of garden. It implied a revolt against the hegemony of architecture. It implied a wholly new relationship between man and nature and a new conception of art in general." "Romanticism" is the usual shorthand for that novelty, but what Sedlmayr stresses is the pantheistic revolution in religious sentiment that this form of Romantic nature worship implies. "The word 'nature' itself now gained a religious coloring. . . . Nature is raised to the rank of an all-pervading spiritual power. She no longer stands confronting man as an alien thing, man is 'sympathetically' woven into her being."

In part, what Sedlmayr presents in *Art in Crisis* is a chronology of the birth of "the aesthetic" as an independent enterprise, one consciously emancipated from its traditional roots in religion. The term "aesthetic" was born at this time—it was first used in its modern sense by the German philosopher Alexander Baumgarten around

1750.[9] The landscape garden; the architectural monument; the art museum as a dedicated building type; the exhibition as a showcase for technological and engineering prowess— these and other outlets for artistic energy testified to a new relationship not only between man and his handiwork but also between man and the forces that transcend him. The phenomenon of the art museum is a conspicuous case in point.

> Regarded as a temple, the museum is not the temple of any particular God but a Pantheon of Art in which the creations of the most varied epochs and peoples are ranged next to one another with equal claims to our attention. For this to be possible, however, it was first necessary for Heracles and Christ to become brothers and for their divinity to be re-garded as a thing of the past, so that they could both be seen in the temple of art, as manifestations of a deity which had swallowed all the others.

It is this aestheticizing impulse that Sedlmayr is everywhere at pains to exhibit and anatomize, showing how it implies, first, the ambition to forge a new autonomy of art and, second, a new autonomy of man. "Man deifies his inventive power," Sedlmayr writes, "with which he hopes both to master nature and to supersede her."

Sedlmayr is often a perceptive critic. The essential aim of Cézanne—whose work, Sedlmayr says, is a "key to understanding modern painting as a whole"—is

> to represent what 'pure' vision can discover in the visible world, vision, that is to say, that has been cleansed of all intellectual and emotional adulteration. . . . The magic that pertains to this way of looking at things is that even the most ordinary scene acquires a strange and original freshness, and above all that color released from its task of indicating and identifying objects, gains an intensity that it never previously possessed.

This seems to me to be right. Yet Sedlmayr puts a minus sign next to Cézanne precisely because in his work "mere paint enjoys a quite peculiar supremacy": "In Cézanne an apple has the same physiognomic value as a face."

Sedlmayr takes a similar approach to Goya. The more we study the work of Goya, he says, especially his series called "Dreams" and "Madness"—subjects, Sedlmayr says, that are the "the most essential thing in modern art"—"the more intense grows our conviction that, like Kant in philosophy and Ledoux's architecture, he is one of the great pulverizing destructive forces that bring a new age into being."

The problem is that Goya's art, like Cézanne's, exists not just as a metaphor of the Zeitgeist, but also as an aesthetic object that has its own internal logic. Apart from everything else, Goya produced objects that commandeer attention, that are deeply interesting to look at.

Sedlmayr knows this. But, having surveyed modern art from the perspective of a spiritual diagnostician, he finds it wanting. At the center of *Art in Crisis* is the insight that, in art as in life, the pursuit of unqualified autonomy is in the end a prescription for disaster, aesthetic as well as existential. Sedlmayr writes as an Augustinian Catholic. For him, the underlying motive for the pursuit of autonomy is pride. The "lost center" of his original title is God. Autonomy, for finite, mortal creatures, is a dangerous illusion. "Autonomous man," he writes, "does not and cannot exist—any more than can autonomous art, architecture, painting and so on. It is of the essence of man that he should be both natural and supernatural. . . . Man is fully human only in so far as he is a repository of the divine spirit."[10]

One need not, I think, share Sedlmayr's theological convictions in order to appreciate the power of his strictures about the search for autonomy. "The fact is," he argues, "that art cannot be assessed by a measure that is purely artistic and nothing else. Indeed, such a purely artistic measure, which ignored the human element, the element which alone gives art its justification, would actually not be an artistic measure at all. It would merely be an aesthetic, and actually the application of purely aesthetic standards is one of the peculiarly inhuman features of the age, for it proclaims by implication the autonomy of the work of art, an autonomy that has no regard to men—the principle of *l'art pour l'art."* Art has its own aesthetic canons of legitimacy and achievement; but those canons are themselves nugatory unless grounded in a measure beyond art. That is the ultimate, indispensable, lesson of *Art in Crisis*.

Roger Kimball

Notes

1. Otto Pächt *The Practice of Art History: Reflections on Method*, translated by David Britt, with an Introduction by Christopher S. Wood (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 1999).
2. See, e.g., Alois Riegl, "The Main Characteristics of the Late Roman *Kunstwollen,"* in *The Vienna School Reader: Politics and Art Historical Method in the 1930s*, edited by Christopher S. Wood (New York: Zone Books, 2003), pages 87-104.
3. Reprinted in *The Vienna School Reader*, pages 133-180.
4. Reprinted in *The Vienna School Reader*, pages 453-485.
5. *The Vienna School Reader*, pages 16, 36.
6. Stephen J. Tonsor "Tribute to Mr. Henry Regnery," The Philadelphia Society Annual Meeting April 27, 1996, available at http://www.conservativeclassics.com/hrlp2.html.
7. Alfred Werner, "God and Modern Art," in *Commentary,* Vol. 27, No. 2 February 1959, pages 182-184.
8. Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, Vol. II: Perspectives of World History, translated by Charles Francis Atkinson. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981).
9. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Reflections on Poetry*, translated by K. Aschenbrenner and W. B. Holther (Berkeley: University of California Press. 1954); *Aesthetica* (Hildesheim, G. Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1961).
10. See Karsten Harries, *The Meaning of Modern Art: A Philosophical Interpretation* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), pages 147-149, for a brief but perceptive discussion of the insights and limits of Sedlmayr's argument in *Art In Crisis.*

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Part One

SYMPTOMS

I affirm
Nature is whole in her least things exprest,
Nor know we with what scope God builds the worm.
Our towns are copied fragments from our breast;
And all man's Babylons strive but to impart
The grandeurs of his Babylonian heart.

FRANCIS THOMPSON.

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I

NEW MASTER PROBLEMS

For the task set us is nothing less than life itself as it struggles to find expression in concrete form.—H. SCHRADE.

SINCE the end of the eighteenth century our principal tasks have included some that were wholly new. They have included problems that have either never previously existed at all or, if they did exist, were of subordinate importance.

Till then men had been chiefly concerned with the church and the palace, but now these things began to be thrust aside, and a succession of new preoccupations, one following rapidly upon the other, began to take their place. Between 1760 and the present day we can distinguish six or seven different master problems, each in its own time clamouring for solution over the whole of Europe. We have landscape gardening, the architectural monument, the museum, the theatre, the exhibition and the factory. None of them as a problem can claim priority of place for more than one or, at the most, for two generations. Each of them, however, is a symptom and we can recognize in the order in which they follow one another a certain specific trend.

Indeed, these master problems show us the main lines of this trend more clearly than do other artistic developments, although the process is to some extent obscured by certain extraneous currents and cross-currents that in the main have no intrinsic cohesion. If we can look at the matter from this point of view, we shall obtain the best available guiding thread through the labyrinth of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

There is one reservation we must make immediately. We have spoken of certain master problems, but it is only with certain key problems of architecture that we are here concerned. It is only the architects and the great landscape gardeners—and indeed we shall mention all of these—that are relevant to our analysis. What has been said only applies in slight measure to the great achievements of painting, despite their profound significance in their own field. This very field, however, lies aside and apart from that in which these master problems arise. Indeed there are really no pictorial master problems at all. Painting is practised as a free art and not to serve any specific end, it is not practised as an art that has a clearly delimited task to perform in public life.

We must, however, observe in this connection that the new master problems do not relate to composite works of art like the palace and the church, which gave to the plastic arts a distinctive place and theme; they are either concerned with pure architecture, as in the case of the architectural monument, or with a mere architectural framework such as a house or museum, which could be filled with the free arts according to taste. It was only in the middle of the nineteenth century that, thanks to the building of theatres, there arose a renaissance of the composite work of art, as such, and in this task alone of all those here concerned painters and sculptors of distinction worked within the strict limits set them by their commission.

Yet in what sense can we still speak of master problems? It is not arbitrary to select just the few we have chosen out of all the multiplicity of tasks that now begin to claim the creative artist's attention. For alongside of those here selected there were stock exchanges to be built, parliaments, universities, hotels, hospitals, railway stations and so on.

We have chosen the term master problem in relation to certain tasks for the following reasons:

(1) because those tasks were of a character that particularly attracted the creative imagination;

(2) because, where these problems were concerned, there came to be a kind of certitude in the whole manner of approach, and something in the nature of a fixed type came into being;

(3) because, even if only in a limited degree, they exercise a certain power over the creation of style in general, so that

the manner in which other tasks were executed tended to approximate to the example which they set;

(4) because consciously or unconsciously these are the problems that may claim to have taken the place of the ancient sacred architecture.

There is moreover in many of the works to which this term master problem has been applied, a suggestion of art's communal significance and power, a thing that the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with their unlimited individualism, tended almost wholly to lose. Although they lack the power of the great composite works of art of the past, they are, for all that, their heirs.

The master problem, in the early period of European civilization, was the building of churches. It was *par excellence* the great composite task in which all the arts were employed. None of the other artistic problems of the day can compare with it in importance, and all in the matter of style and motif came under its influence.

Beginning with the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, new problems began to arise. Among these, in a few isolated districts, that of the town hall attained for a short time an importance comparable to that of church building, and began to develop a new pictorial world of its own. The future belonged to two different problems, which to a certain extent were two expressions of one and the same problem, it belonged to the castle and the palace. Created in the fourteenth century, these last began by the fifteenth to carry a weight equal to that of church building. Indeed their importance tended at times to be even greater. They too became sacred buildings, centres of the cult of the great, the divine man, and developed their own pictorial world, their own iconology. Beside the composite works of art, which are the churches, there now stand their worldly counterparts, and it is these that seem of the two to have the greater self-assurance.

THE WITHERING OF THE OLD COMPOSITE WORKS OF ART

In the course of the nineteenth century the old master problems begin to lose their priority. Not that many castles, urban palaces and churches fail to get built. Many are still erected, and often at great cost. But the old certitude and self-assurance is gone and the new edifices lack the power to originate styles.

Church architecture can no longer produce a new clear-cut building. It gropes indecisively after empty shells, seeking vainly for some kind of hold in them; it explores the early Christian, Byzantine, the Romanesque, Gothic and Renaissance. From time to time it even seeks refuge in the externals of a Greek temple. Yet how superficial is this whole system of forms is shown with horrifying clarity by Schinkel's designs for the *Werdersche Kirche* in Berlin. The basic cubic shape has remained unchanged, but it is dressed up, it is masked to suit the changing whim of the beholder, now with Romanesque, now with the Gothic, now with disguises suggestive of the antique. This crass divorce between basic and subordinate design, the latter being now conceived as mere decoration, becomes the fate of European art as a whole, yet nowhere is it so plainly visible as in ecclesiastical architecture, a thing for which there are no doubt deeper reasons.

The fact is that the whole conception of a church building—and this not in Protestant countries alone—is of something massive and bare, it is a thing speaking to the reason. The religious element in it is not sacramental and mythical, rather it is poetic, it is not something organic, but a kind of garment, a piece of ideological drapery borrowed from the past. Only once in the whole period from 1760 to the present day does it seem as if the problem of ecclesiastical architecture could again become the master problem of the day. This was at the time of the Holy Alliance. It was at this time that Schinkel conceived his designs for a German National Cathedral in Gothic form. In 1815 there appeared a pamphlet, *The New Church*, and shortly after this men set about the building and completion of Cologne Cathedral with considerable enthusiasm, but again the thought inspiring these plans betrays a certain hollowness, and even later in the century, when the new Neo-Gothic churches cling more faithfully to their historical models, the details betray the unsubstantial quality of ghosts conjured up from another world. For all that, the Neo-Gothic was the form of ecclesiastical architecture that maintained itself most consistently and for the longest time, though its individual manifestations expressed a wide variety of spiritual attitudes. Right up to our own day churches continued to be built in Neo-Gothic style.

Yet, unlike the revival of scholastic philosophy, the revival of the Gothic church did not succeed—it had no spiritual content—a fact which finds its most palpable expression in the circumstance that this architectural revival had no pictorial counterpart. Architectural achievement no longer had any link with the anæmic lucubrations of contemporary religious art. The church of the nineteenth century is bankrupt of anything in the nature of an 'iconology'. What is produced in the way of pictures is to an astonishing degree theologically empty of imagination, its content being subjective and devoid of genuine precision of thought. The story of the decline of Christian iconology—it is paralleled by the decline of ancient mythology—will one day have to be written, so that we may see from it just what really did happen to the nineteenth-century church. There was no longer any picture produced that had a valid place as an instrument of a cult. Nor could it be otherwise, for religious sentiment had become purely æsthetic.

Attempts to make so-called 'modern' architectural trends bear fruit in the ecclesiastical field began late, and, despite some achievements by outstanding artists, remained on the whole as unsuccessful as were the efforts to win back the working man to Christianity. Neither the worker nor the new technical architecture was ever Christianized. Yet those visions of enormous buildings made of iron and glass seem to have had in them a hidden transcendental element, and one cannot help feeling that the very promising conception of these structures held out the possibility of a new kind of church, precisely as, at the end of the antique world, the new form of Christian religious edifices developed from the profane architecture of the day. But the opportunity was not seen, or, if seen, was not exploited.

The story of the castle and the palace is the same. Towards the middle of the century castle architecture displays even greater conservatism than the church, its traditional forms persisting with a chronological irrelevance that suggests the museum piece. Round 1830, however, this domain also is invaded by an all-pervading uncertainty. A new type of castle with genuine validity of meaning failed utterly to appear, nor could it do so. The castles of Ludwig II of Bavaria seem to exhibit the general malady in an extreme form; the castle became merely theatrical—in the worst sense of that term. Nowhere is that more in evidence than in the reproductions of Versailles, at Herrenchiemsee, a thing that many have attempted to endow with a more profound meaning than it actually possesses.[1] Here the rooms in which a monarch living on the verge of lunacy sought to enact the part of a new Roi Soleil, are in the general plan set in the midst of others which serve no clearly discernible purpose at all. They are thus literally in the void. This is a symptom and symbol of what the castle stands for spiritually—and its plagiarized iconology is as sterile and as empty as itself.

The uncertainty that is increasingly displayed in tackling these ancient problems is all too palpable; the fact is that the first real attempts to form a new style originated from the handling of quite different themes. They derived from attempts to solve problems unknown to the earlier epochs of Western culture or to any other culture of which world history has a record.

However, it is as well to start this general review with a work of art that over some seventy years absorbed an enormous volume of spiritual and material energy. It has certainly the right to the title of master problem, though during its period of greatness the emphasis on other forms of artistic effort may from time to time have been more intense, and its symptomatic importance for the central theme of this book is very considerable indeed. The work of art in question is the landscape garden.

THE LANDSCAPE GARDEN

The landscape garden had its origin in England about 1720 as a conscious protest against the architectural gardens of France. The French product's use of geometric forms in its layout was now rejected as something unnatural. From 1760 onwards the 'English Garden' swept the Continent with a rapidity and completeness which, in a matter of this kind, was wholly without precedent. Under the hands of artists of note its early and uncertain attempts to take shape gave place to creations of unparalleled grandeur. Everywhere the French parks were transformed, often at enormous expense, into English ones. Towards the end of the epoch—say, around 1830—whole stretches of territory began to be transformed into nature parks. Enthusiasm for the new art infected the widest circles. Even at the end of the epoch Prince Armin von Pückler-Muskau, who had twice attempted to transform his great Silesian properties into a single landscape and had ruined himself in doing so, could still speak of a prevailing 'Parkomania'.

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[1] H. Evers, *Tod, Macht und Raum als Bereiche der Architektur* (Munich, 1939).

Since the time of the Renaissance the rivalry of the arts for precedence had been a constant theme of discussion among artistic theorists. Now for the first time the gardener's art claimed the primacy. The artistic theory of the day bases this claim on a variety of grounds. Firstly, the art of the gardener is of all the most comprehensive since it comprises, and in a spatial sense actually contains, both sculpture and architecture, even as architecture contains sculpture, painting and decoration. It therefore brings into being the most comprehensive of all imaginable works of art—a work of art that may well be termed 'super-comprehensive'. Yet there is a deeper sense in which the term comprehensive may be applied to this form of art, for it is indeed a rival to architecture, which it surpasses above all in the sheer size of its productions; moreover, it brings into being free creations in space of superlative magnificence. It composes with such organic masses as groups of bushes and trees, with hills and great expanses of lawn and with ponds and streams, it entwines among these tree masses the decorative element provided by flowering plants. Out of the constituent elements of nature it builds nature pictures which the painter can only hold fast within a two-dimensional framework; further—and here it is comparable to music—it creates entire successions of such pictures, an advantage to which other arts than music cannot aspire. In the different scenes that it calls into being it can ring the changes on all our feelings, can present us with grandeur, with charm, with the genial, the melancholy and the wild.[1] Finally—and this is the weightiest ground of all—this art is most intimately connected with nature herself, and is, like nature, elusive and changing. 'None of the imitative arts is as interwoven with nature as is that of the gardener, none approximates to her more closely.'[2] Such theoretical justification of the landscape gardener's primacy among the arts would mean but little did not the actual facts of the case clearly show landscape gardening to have aroused an enthusiasm far exceeding that felt for any other art at the time. Everywhere we find expressions of a veritable passion for these novel works of art, a passion comparable to the building passion of the Baroque.

All this proves that the landscape garden was something much more than a new kind of garden. It implied a revolt against the hegemony of architecture. It implied a wholly new relationship between man and nature and a new conception of art in general.

One condition was essential if the landscape garden was to come into being. The active relation of man to nature had necessarily to become a passive one! This new passive subordination to nature answers an ethical and religious need; indeed, the word 'nature' itself now gained a religious colouring, the concept being interpreted in a pantheistic sense. Nature is raised to the rank of an all-pervading spiritual power. She no longer stands confronting man as an alien thing, man is 'sympathetically' woven into her being. 'In both man and nature is revealed the same animating entity, an ineffable being, a being friendly towards us all that works its will in things. All that nature creates is perfect and all that she creates is beautiful. To nature in whom the ultimate government of things resides men attribute reason and an innate power for beauty.'[3]

The Englishman, Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713), whom Goethe reckoned among the minds by which the character of the entire century was determined, was the prophet of this new pantheistic nature cult, a cult which made an enormous impression on all Europe and particularly on Germany. There its influence culminated in the works of Sckell (1750–1832) and Lenné (1789–1866), who must be accounted among the greatest artists of their age. Their achievements are far too little known.

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[1] Franz Hallbaum, *Der Landschaftsgarten* (Munich, 1927).

[2] Franz Hallbaum, *ibid.*

[3] Franz Hallbaum, *ibid.*, part of whose writing is here quoted verbatim.

To the first condition for the flourishing of the landscape gardener's art there must be added a second, and one whose character is almost mystical. The perfection of nature can only exist as an idea; the idea may be that of a metaphysical beauty which shines through created things or it may refer to some primeval paradise that existed at the world's beginning, to which man strives to return. It is the latter of these two conceptions that seems to have predominated.

Nature was a garden in her aboriginal and perfect state—the religious origin of this conception is more than abundantly clear—and the task of art in such circumstances was to recreate nature in this her high primal perfection, a state which had still been preserved in certain parts of the world. In general, however—and here is a curious twist in this thought—the picture of nature in perfection is only mirrored in so-called 'heroic' landscape painting.

In this last the painter has already made his selection between different types of beauty and formed the subject of his selection into a picture under observance of certain specific rules. His selection is more or less identical with that for which the landscape gardener seeks to achieve three-dimension recreation. Hence comes the oft and emphatically repeated injunction relating to the formation of the landscape gardener's style, namely, that he should fill his mind with the ideas of the great landscape painters and should wherever possible be a landscape painter himself and so approximate in his work of imitative creation to the ideal aboriginal picture. Thus the creation of the landscape painter is to some extent made to assume the place of the creation of God Himself and it is through the landscape painter's mind alone that the perfection of God's creation is supposedly capable of being discerned.[1]

This bondage to the precedent set by the painter disappears with the course of time. It disappears when the new art attains a consciousness of its own individuality and its own inherent laws. Even then, however, it was still felt that gardens should awaken in the beholder memories of the Garden of Eden, of Arcadia, of Milton's Paradise, of Elysium and of the idylls and the fairyland of poetry.

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[1] Franz Hallbaum, *ibid.*

We ourselves are far from having read this meaning into the thing. The men of that day—both the creating artist and the delighted beholders—were in the main no less explicitly conscious of it. Indeed there is a delicate suggestion of this in a letter which Goethe wrote to Frau von Stein in 1778, a letter in which he described his impressions of the celebrated English Park of the Duke of Anhalt in Dessau, one of the first created on German soil. 'It is infinitely beautiful here now. Yesterday evening, as we strolled among the pools, canals and little woods, I was much moved at the thought of how the gods have permitted this prince to build a dream around himself. It seems, as one thus passes through it, like a fairy tale that is enacted before one, and has quite the character of the Elysian fields. . . .'[1]

The relation of man, therefore, to this new art, when the art was at its zenith, was one that was markedly exalted and religious, and incidentally that art could on occasion be filled with a Christian content and with Christian symbols and pictures. The Bergpark at Guttenstein in Lower Austria is a case in point.[2]

These gardens then are the cult centres of a nature cult, in which all is calculated to fix the feeling and imagination onto an omnipotent directing being. The aim was that in a multiplicity of ways this being should be felt to be speaking to anyone who wandered through these great expanses of space.

Men no longer approach these cult centres as a community or congregation. The ideal is that they should come there as solitary individuals, though they may in certain circumstances appear in the company of their beloved, or of a friend, or at best in very small groups, groups united in a common devotion by the bond of friendship. Among the manifold features presented by nature in such a garden there is no single place that is exalted above the rest, whether in the formal sense of the Baroque's *point de vue*, or in the sacred sense of the term, the sense which would apply to the altar in a temple or a church. It is rather felt that 'in this gentle variety one thing should flow into another as should the emotions they excite', this being in character with the dreamlike quality of the experience and the whole idea of the Elysian fields, 'there should be no high point acting as a magnet to our desire, but men should wander around never enquiring whence they have come and whither they are going'.[1] The diffuseness of form corresponds to the diffuseness of feeling—both being qualities alien, to the point of being objects of horror, to the whole spirit of architecture.

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[1] Quoted by P. O. Rave, *Gärten der Goethezeit* (Leipzig, 1941).

[2] Cf. the unpublished monograph of Elisabeth Gasselseder on the beginnings of the landscape park in Austria.

The landscape garden may therefore well be spoken of as a master problem, if only because more than any other work of art, it is an expression of religious feeling. It is also a master problem in so far as it puts other arts beneath its spell. It even seeks a kind of state of nature in architecture, in so far as architecture is made to share in and express nature's perishable and transitory quality, and is even—in the form of ruins—made to represent the inception of its own return to nature. The process leads to a preference for structures made up of natural elements, formless grottoes and arbours and buildings made out of crude unfinished stone or wood—borrowings, as it were from the aboriginal state of natural man.[2] All this would be much more plain to see if, as part of their allegorical element, such parks were not equipped with sculptures and pieces of architecture in which the new sentiment was mingled with elements of the dying thought of the Baroque, though more exact research is still required to distinguish between the two.

Many contemporary works of music and poetry have an inner connection with the spiritual world of the landscape park. They have often indeed a deeper significance than appears on the surface, for they partake of the character of hymns of a nature cult, a cult of which these great spaces of the landscape park constitute the most grandiose expression. Goethe's fragment, *Nature* (1781–82), is just such a hymn in prose.

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[1] Goethe, *ibid.*

[2] Moritz Dreger, 'Der Englische Garten und seine Beziehung zur Baukunst', in *Allgemeine Bauzeitung* (1896).

How much these parks meant to this particular age is evident from the length of time over which they lasted. From 1760 to 1830 it is this work of art that can show the greatest sureness in its inward development and the greatest consistency in the spiritual attitude which it expresses.

As a phenomenon of social history, this art form derives directly from the feudal system of large-scale landownership, and if one reflects that its most superb manifestations involved a curtailment of the productively cultivated land surface to make room for an idyllic wilderness, one can gauge how vehement were the spiritual forces achieving expression therein. That vehemence remains a fact even if seen from the angle of mere mundane consideration; these creations may often appear to have about them a considerable element of the ludicrous.

The decline begins around 1830. The park acquires the character of a museum, a kind of nature museum. Exotic plants are planted in it as in a botanical garden. The original genuine spiritual impulse behind the thing, the sense of an all-pervading presence, in a word, the religious element begins to disappear. This fading out of the original content can be traced in certain utterances of the ageing Goethe. By the middle of the century the park's successors have acquired certain unmistakable characteristics of an exhibition.

Yet despite these changes there persisted in these landscape parks something of that which had given them their original form, even when that something was itself no longer 'instinct with any life of its own'. And even in our own day the idea has survived that nature, in the form of a forest, for instance, is the noblest form of church.

THE ARCHITECTURAL MONUMENT

While the landscape garden was approaching its classical form there appeared round about 1780 a new master problem, that of the architectural monument. This occupied as did no other the minds of the Revolution's leading architects and their German successors in the generation of Hölderlin and Beethoven. In all of them, in Ledoux, Boullée, Lequeu, Dubut, in Gilly, Weinbrenner, Gentz and Haller von Hallerstein, we feel the passion with which this theme inspires them, nor is the significance of that passion mitigated by the fact that during the stormy years of the Revolution and of the Napoleonic wars most of these plans, with all the grandeur that their conceptions attained, remained on paper.[1]

The architectural monument is the most decisive expression of the rejection both of the Baroque itself and of the mediatory attempts of the late Baroque's classical phase. With Delafosse (1734–1789) the ideal monument is still made up of a combination of late baroque and antique elements, but having reached this new stage, it returns to the pure elemental forms of geometry. It seeks unbroken planes, the power of mass, it seeks after solemn repose and for an expression of the eternal and indestructible. One now finds architecture realized in its purest form in the idea of the monument, funereal and others.

Architecture and organic nature, which in the Baroque's composite works of art were completely fused, now find themselves in complete opposition to one another, as do the reactions which they call forth. The landscape garden induces a feeling gently tinged with sentiment, a free and continuous changing of moods, whereas the monument casts that stark spell upon the soul which is begotten by grandeur surpassing the human scale, the grandeur to which vast size gives expression (the megalomania of the time).

The strength of the idea is shown by the fact that it casts its influence on every kind of artistic task. It favours those whose form approximates most closely to that of the monumental, structures, that is to say, which need no windows, or in which these can be reduced to a minimum. So it comes that museums and libraries begin to be planned in cubic forms of lapidary simplicity—

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[1] Cf. Emil Kaufmann, *Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier* (Vienna, 1932); Emil Kaufmann, 'Die Stadt des Architekten Ledoux', in *Kunstwissenschaftliche Forschungen II* (1933); Alste Oncken, *Friedrich Gilly* (Berlin, 1935); Carl Linfert, 'Die Architekturzeichnung', in *Kunstwissenshaftliche Forschungen I* (1933) (on Delafosse); Charles Raval, *Claude-Nicolas Ledoux* (1945).

buildings which, in the most impractical manner imaginable, receive their light wholly from above. The prison with its soul-shattering air of timelessness becomes a favourite theme (*Fidelio!*). This triad of monument, museum and prison illustrates, as does nothing else, the character of the time. Even the church takes on the character of a monumental mausoleum, and it too receives its only light from above. In housebuilding there is very significantly a preference for the form of the pure cube.

The 'barriers' on the boundaries of Paris, which are really nothing more than a ring of tollgates on the roads leading out of the city, are in Ledoux's design transformed into the shapes of ponderous temples and monuments, they become the 'Propylea of Paris'. Gilly designs a furnace that is like a monument to the elemental forces of nature. As late as 1826, at the beginning of his journey through England, Schinkel sees the typical landscape of early industrialism in the Black Country as hundreds of smoking obelisks, he sees it in fact as a manifestation of monumental quasi-Egyptian grandeur.

The monumental has a tendency to invade every department of plastic creation. One is particularly struck by the monumentality of Empire furniture, a process which has its origin wholly in this 'Revolution of the Monument'. Pieces of furniture are regarded as independent architectural creations which have no connection with the room that surrounds them. A wardrobe is allowed to look like a funereal monument, like a temple doorway surmounted by hieroglyphs; a chest of drawers has the appearance of a pedestal, or a piece of monumental statuary or it looks like an altar; a grandfather clock looks like an obelisk, a stove resembles a Doric pillar, a night commode has the shape of a broken column.

If any forms of vegetation are combined with architecture, preference is shown for the geometric and compact, such as the cypress, or for its native substitute, the poplar. Their shapes have the faculty of combining directly with architecture, and architecture fits directly into such surroundings.

In the great state festivals of the French Revolution the monumentalizing process is applied to human masses also. Around the cube of the altar soldiers and people are grouped together in huge rigid and inanimate geometrical blocks. It is in stage management of these state functions that for the first time the creation of a human mass becomes a thing directly visible.[1]

In painting, a tendency towards the elemental forms the counterpart of the cult of the monument style in other departments. Painters revert to the primal forms on which the world is built, to the element of the gigantic in nature, to her 'silences' and unapproachability, all things that make man look small by comparison. They turn again to the everlasting things, to the mountains, to the sea and to the polar ice. This tendency finds its purest embodiment in the paintings of Caspar David Friedrich, though that is but one among a number of facets in his art. It is significant that Friedrich's pictures frequently show monuments of a primitive kind, tombs and cemeteries.

To show these unadorned elemental forms to their best advantage the artist prefers a particular kind of light. His love for unbroken plane surfaces causes him automatically to make use of light thrown directly downwards. Such lighting effects are, however, something more than a mere necessary evil, an indispensable expedient for preserving a closed geometric external pattern. They are prized for their own sake. The 'cellar light' effect there seems already to put us in touch with the nether world, and for the first time since the crypts of Romanesque days, the imagination of architects is drawn in that direction. Ledoux plans his cemetery at Chaux as a huge congeries of catacomb passages in several stories, which debouch into a vast spherical-shaped hull of eighty-metres diameter.[2] The sphere is half-buried in the earth, while the other half towers above earth's level. This spherical hall is not the seat of a cult, nor can it even be entered. One can only look into it, and it obtains its only light from an opening at its summit. According to Ledoux's own explanation, it symbolizes eternity, while the upward view towards the point where the light enters symbolizes the upward glance from the kingdom of the dead to the light of heaven. The same symbolical stops are pulled out in the exterior design of the building. The hemisphere towers above the naked plain like a pyramid in exalted simplicity of line. No tree, no grass, no friendly water course may be anywhere near it. Clouds of smoke from the subterranean cremation chambers rise from the ground like vapours from the nether regions, so that whoever approaches the cemetery may shudder as the image of annihilation is borne upon his mind, *l'image du néant.*

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[1] A Heidelberg dissertation on the state festivals of the French Revolution was not available to me.

[2] Emil Kaufmann, 'Die Stadt des Architekten Ledoux', in *Kunstwissenschaftliche Forschungen II* (1933).

But similar flights of imagination are also to be found among Ledoux's contemporaries, both those of his own age and those younger than himself. Thus Ledoux's pupil Lequeu designs an '*entrée à la demeure de Pluton*'—an entrance to the nether world—a temple to the '*dieu inconnu*' built into the face of the rock, the first of its kind since the Roman rock temples of Petra.[1] The works of Gilly and Weinbrenner frequently show us the idea of the subterranean vaults. Gilly's fantasy carries forms reminiscent of the antique into the bowels of the earth, while Boullée, a man of approximately Ledoux's own age, and the second great leader in the architecture of the Revolution, comes forward with proposals for an '*architecture ensevelie*' and lays special stress on '*proportions basses et enfouiées dans la terre*' and on '*le noir de l'architecture des ombres dessiné par l'effet des ombres encore plus noires*'. He describes how it was the effect of building by moonlight that first gave him the idea for what he was striving to achieve in his use of architectural masses, to distribute light and shadow, for moonlight lends buildings a more monumental air, and though their outlines remain as clear as before, they appear more mysterious and intangible under its influence.[2] This recalls something seen very clearly by Ernst Jünger. 'Shadow values', says Jünger, 'at one and the same time both reveal forms and spiritualize them. Those forms in this way raised to a higher stage, and acquire the imperishability inherent in the logic of their line. The effect of objects in such circumstances is both more immaterial and more powerful.'[3]

There is an organic connection between this nocturnal view of

[1] Emil Kaufmann, 'Etienne-Louis Boullée', in *Art Bulletin* (1955).
[2] Emil Kaufmann, *ibid.*
[3] Ernst Jünger, *Gärten und Strassen*, 2nd edition (Hamburg, 1942).

things and a nocturnal view of life, of nature, and of antiquity, a deep connection with the 'cthonic' powers with the 'dark earth' with Tartarus and with death.[1] Prepared for in France in the works of Delafosse, in Italy in those of Piranesi—around the decade 1720–1730—this nocturnal view becomes the fundamental spiritual experience of those born around 1770, the mightiest generation that Germany produced since that of Dürer, the generation of Gilly, Friedrich, Runge, Hölderlin, Novalis, E. T. A. Hofmann, Beethoven, Görres and the rest.

The revolutionary architects now begin to resurrect ancient architectural ideas that had long been buried in oblivion. Aspects of Greek architecture that had been wholly forgotten were again brought to light, particular interest being shown in the elemental might of the archaic, and the Doric. A curious and somewhat cold-blooded fusion came into being between the ancient and profound on the one hand and the utopian and abstract on the other.

The spiritual postulates behind this revolution have still to be more exactly examined. One of them is that cult of posterity which we find in Diderot and which Becker seeks to interpret as a secularizing of the Christian religion.[2] 'The ideas, and the turns of phrase are essentially religious, essentially Christian. In place of the honouring of God, Diderot has put the awe inspired by posterity, in place of the hope of eternal life in heaven, the hope of living on in the memory of coming generations.' There is much significance in Diderot's saying, 'Posterity is for the philosopher what the next world is for the religious people.' Monuments are the things that guarantee survival in the memory of coming generations. Similarly it is felt that all architecture should have the quality of a monument, so that it can proclaim the greatness of the age to generations that are to come.

Corresponding to this peculiar feeling towards posterity there is profound analagous feeling towards the generations that have gone before and particularly towards their primeval origins. It is in these last that men feel absolute greatness and mystery to reside, all those things in fact that continue to the end of time.

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[1] Cf. Alfred Baümler, *Einleibung zu der Ausgabe von L. Bachofen, Der Mythos von Orient und Occident* (Munich, 1926).

[2] C. L. Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* (New Haven, 1932).

But all this merely touches the fringe of this religion of the monument—it does not lay bare its kernel. This last seems to me to consist in a kind of primeval sense of eternity, eternity not being conceived here as something outside of time but rather as that which outlasts all ages and is materially imperishable, as simple endlessness—and this feeling also attaches to things which stand in some kind of relation to this particular kind of eternity—to the innermost core of the earth, to stone, to death and to architecture in the primal sense of that term. In 1784, when the cult of the monument was at its zenith, there appeared Goethe's reflections *On Granite*—a hymn that gives expression to this peculiar religious sentiment, while in 1788 there appeared Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* with its celebrated sentence concerning the moral law within us. In 1787 an astronomer proposed that as a monument to Frederick II 'stars which are as yet unknown should be named after him, and, in point of fact, seventy-six smaller stars which had been discovered shortly before this received the name 'Friedrichs Ehre'. Berger published an engraving showing the new constellation, and some years later, in 1792, Chodowiecki represented Frederick's translation to the stars quite in the manner of an apotheosis. The idea of such an astral monument to Frederick was immediately greeted as a very happy one. Even so people also wanted an earthly monument for him, and one project for this last shows us a mighty pyramid, whose only ornament was to be the inscription 'Frederico'.'[1]

All this makes it not too difficult to understand that Ledoux in his folio of engravings, *L'architecture consideree sous les rappors de l'art des moeurs et de la législation* (1804), should interrupt the sequence of the designs, a thing which he only does at one other point, and allow the picture of the sphere-cemetery of Chaux to be followed by one of the universe and its circling planets. It carries the title '*Elévation du cimitière de la ville de Chaux*', which implies that the idea of the one has a bearing on the other. After the cemetery of the body comes the cemetery of the spirit—eternity—symbolized by spheres circling in the void.

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[1] Hubert Schrade, *Das deutsche Nationaldenkmal* (Munich, 1934).

This 'Religion of the Eternal'—a thing whose icy abstractions relate it closely to the 'Cult of Reason'—is less known to most people than the new cult of nature which is really its polar opposite. Only a few of the monuments of this period have survived, the great earthen pyramid on the field of Waterloo being one of them. Moreover, these ideas have had comparatively little influence on our time. Modern architecture at its zenith has tended to reject the monumental, even though Adolf Loos could still plan a skyscraper in the shape of a gigantic Doric column—a thought which has its roots in the architecture of the first Revolution.[1] Only in some of the war cemeteries and monuments of the First World War can one perceive something like a reawakening of this feeling for the cthonic and the dead. It is no mere chance that three buildings dating back to this period when the monumental played so important a part have transformed into memorials for the 'Unknown Warrior': The *Arc de Triomphe* in Paris (1806), the *Alte Wache* in Berlin (1816) and *Äussere Burgtor* in Vienna (1824).

If the nature park is the most powerful expression of pantheistic religion, then the monument and the memorial, interpreted in the manner here explained, are the most powerful expressions of a Deism whose God is a God that is impersonal and unknown, a God of the Philosophers, who is in fact simply the idea of the eternal and undying 'Eternity, the largest of the idols, the mightiest of the rivals of God' (G. K. Chesterton). Among the designs for temples that belong to that time are temples of the earth and temples of immortality, and finally these give place to a cult building dedicated to any God one happens to fancy. A design of Durand and Thibault (1803) shows us a '*lieu d'assemblée pour la réunion des citoyens d'une commune, à l'effet d'y exercer* un culte quelconque!'

THE MUSEUM

Round about 1820 'the transition from the private collections of exalted persons to the public popular museum had just been completed, and so, in contrast to the present day, the museum represented one of the most progressive institutions of the age. For that generation art really meant something holy. A few decades later the museum had ceased to play that semi-sacramental rôle, but the age of Schinkel still saw in the museum a temple of art. For this reason the pillared portico of his museum building is not such a senseless thing (senseless at least from the point of view of means and ends) as it may perhaps appear today'.[1]

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[1] Illustration in Emil Kaufmann, *Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier* (Vienna, 1932).

'It is the first one in Germany that seeks to voice for us with the noble but gentle certitudes of a Greek temple.'[2] Indeed, the motif of the temple which, since the late eighteenth century, men had been conjuring up from the dead to serve the most varied purposes, finds here and here alone the task with which it can effect a marriage that is meaningful and wholly unstrained.

Even the interior was absolved from the duty of serving any utilitarian end. The purpose of the central hall which bore a strong resemblance to the Pantheon, was in Schinkel's own words to 'exalt' the visitor, it was 'to be the sanctuary in which the most precious was stored', a place where the individual could recollect himself and prepare himself for the mysteries that awaited him; it was not to be a social place, but rather a place where the individual divorced himself from society (*eine Stätte . . . der Entgesellschaftung*[3]). 'By transforming the museum into a temple of art, a temple whose purpose is to withdraw the sacrament which it reveals from the press of the profane,' Schinkel had, to use Hölderlin's expression, 'created the "aesthetic church" which Goethe and Wackenroder had also had in mind when they spoke of the holiness of art.' This idea of the holiness of art is something entirely new, as it is also wholly new to see in the artist 'the highest among earthly beings', the 'priest of art'. Thus Goethe had already spoken of the artist in 1773 as 'equal to God' and as 'The anointed of God', whom we worship, before whom the world prostrates itself as before its creator, while

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[1] Wolfgang Herrmann, *Deutsche Baukunst des* 19. *und* 20. *Jahrhunderts*, Vol. I (Breslau, 1932).

[2] Hubert Schrade, *Die ästhetische Kirche* (1936). I follow the latter's account in this section, in part verbatim.

[3] Hubert Schrade, *ibid.*

Wackenroder compared the delight taken in works of art to prayer.

Regarded as a temple, the museum is not the temple of any particular God but a Pantheon of Art in which the creations of the most varied epochs and peoples are ranged next to one another with equal claims to our attention. For this to be possible, however, it was first necessary that the divinities for whom the works were created in the first place should themselves be undeified. 'It was necessary for Heracles and Christ to become brothers and for their divinity to be regarded as a thing of the past, so that they could both be seen in the temple of art, as manifestations of a deity which had swallowed all the others.[1]

This spirit of toleration is the fundamental characteristic of the 'æsthetic church', and it is to some extent in accord with it that next to a picture representing Christ there should be one of still life, and next to that again a portrait or a landscape. Its greatest saint is the 'Humanus', the embodiment of creative humanity. In this 'moderating' atmosphere the museum resolves all religions into things of the past, absorbing them into a new pan-religion of art, which in its turn corresponds to the pan-religion of nature.

This new pan-divinity, which a vague and tolerant religious sentiment had conceived, is the same as that proclaimed by Schleiermacher (1768–1834). All belief in God is only truly religious in so far as it expresses a feeling for the infinite nature of God, in so far, that is to say, as it is a sense of the infinite nature of the universe, in so far as it is '*Anschauung des Universums*', a contemplation of the universe. And 'if it is true that there are sudden conversions, experiences which cause a man, who at the time had no thought of rising superior to finite things, to be suddenly uplifted—if there are experiences which by a flash of direct illumination and in a moment of time, awaken a sense of the universe in such a man so that he is overwhelmed by the glory thereof, then I believe that more than any other thing the contemplation of great works of art will perform this miracle'.

'What could already be detected in Schinkel's museum building, becomes more palpable in the work of Klenze. The museum

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[1] Hubert Schrade, *ibid.*

. . . is one of the truly living ideals of this age.' This was the time when Europe's most impressive museum buildings came into being—the Glyptothek in Munich (1816–1834), the British Museum in London (1824) and many others.

The strength of the driving force behind this activity can be seen in the fact that it lends its peculiar spiritual colouring to works other than itself. The castle which Ludwig I had erected in Munich contains many apartments which are scarcely distinguishable from those of a museum. One example, more compelling perhaps than any other, which shows us how the ideal of the museum could determine the character of a private dwelling is Wilhelm von Humboldt's house in Tegel. The museum mentality shows itself even in municipal buildings. While the impression one receives from the town-planning designs of the architects of the Revolution is chiefly that of a piling up of monuments—Weinbrenner's Karlsruhe is a case in point—the Munich of Ludwig I becomes a kind of museum of architecture.

Nowhere however is this tendency more clearly discernible than in the way in which even monuments are transformed into museums. Klenze's Valhalla (1830–1842), though formally this was derived from Gilly's memorial designs, is really a museum as far as the spirit behind the work is concerned. 'In this connection there is much significance in the book which was written by Ludwig I when faced by the prospect of certain difficulties ahead, for this is arranged exactly like a museum catalogue, and there is for every name and bust of those immortalized here, a short account of the general character of the person concerned and of his or her achievements in history.' The result is that where such places are concerned, we ourselves unconsciously assume the rôles of museum visitors. Something of the museum spirit even makes its way into the church designs of that time.

The later forms of the museum never attained to that happy idealism that marked the designs of the twenties. Following upon the idea of the museum as an æsthetic church, two later conceptions were of some importance. The museum of the middle nineteenth century is the 'palace of the arts', the emphasis being significantly placed, not on the antique exhibits, but on the art of the

Renaissance; not on sculpture but on painting. Alternatively the museum becomes a kind of permanent art exhibition.

Though the museum could not maintain its position as a master problem for long, and has long since had to accord this place to other forms of endeavour, it is nevertheless true that its spirit still exercises a powerful influence in all departments of life. Ernst Jünger has seen this more clearly than anybody else.

'It is all too easy to underrate the power which the impulse behind the museum has attained (a power which is still increasing), or of the area over which it operates. But one can form some estimate of it, if one thinks of the way in which churches get transformed into museums. There are countless persons today who visit them in exactly the same spirit as that in which they would visit a museum, and the churches adjust themselves accordingly. . . .'

One might add that the older families seem to be taking a leaf out of this book. We find princes who, in the way they treat the stately halls they have inherited, are hardly to be distinguished from curators of museums, while others build up their incomes out of the entrance fees paid by crowds of trippers and the catering profits which are incidental to such a trade.

And yet these are only sidelines of what we may call the museum impulse or museum urge. It is in the preservation of the countryside and of historic monuments that this urge is most apparent, for here it sets up a gigantic system of taboos. Today there are flowers, trees, woods, moors, houses, villages, towns and even human beings over whom this same museum taboo is made effective.

If we see the matter from this angle we can discern the relationship between the empire of the museum on the one hand and the great funerary cults, the cults of the dead, on the other. We can, as it were, hear the museum confessing itself to be monument's or memorial's lawful daughter, for all the things to which we have just alluded are spoken of in technical and official language as memorials—we have but to consider the German word *naturdenkmal* (or nature memorial) and to reflect upon the fact that the officials in charge are called 'Conservaters', a word the very sound of which calls up suggestions of mummification.

'It is in this museum-urge (*im Musealen Trieb*) that our learning shows a face turned towards the things of death.'[1]

UTILITARIAN AND DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE

For a short time in the thirties domestic architecture and the architecture of utility become the problems, in the solution of which the highest degree both of novelty and quality is achieved. This brief phase is in sharp contrast both to the one that precedes and the one that follows it.

In architecture these years are marked by a pronounced 'Objectivity'. Everywhere now men are attracted towards purely practical problems which are treated in a thoroughly unsentimental and, in some ways, an almost unfeeling fashion. The designs are instinct with a modern spirit that made them particularly attractive to the pioneers of the 'New Building' at the beginning of the twentieth century, before this last had developed into the radicalism of pure functional construction. Even so they surpass modern building in their harmonious balance between a utilitarianism, strongly suggestive of the present day, and a certain dignity and poise which, indeed, has never since been equalled, and which certainly prevents them from appearing wholly dehumanized.

The new movement rejects both the old monumentalizing tendencies and the history-mongering of the museum cult. After his English journey in which he became acquainted with modern industrial building, Schinkel declares, 'The sense of the monumental has been lost.' There is now a clear tendency to appropriate dead forms for living needs. In 1828 a young thirty-three-year-old architect named Hübsch began formulating the new ideas and at about the same time Schinkel put what he was now learning into words. But leading painters of the day were thinking along the same lines as the architects. 'The peculiar characteristics of Greek art can never become those of the art of our own day. It is much the same with the medieval manner of representation.' These are the cool but decided words of Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller in 1832.

The turning-point comes somewhat before 1830. This phase is very striking in the work of Schinkel, whose aptitude for changing his outlook almost amounts to genius (though it also argues a certain lack of roots); certainly in his work he passed through all the phases that followed the revolution. As a pupil of Gilly, he had begun with the 'Königswache', a structure that has about it much of the character of a monument. He had created in the 'Altes Museum' one of the principal works of the æsthetic church of the twenties. Now in the thirties he came to his most simple and sincere creations. He achieved in that period an architecture of pure utility, though another 'theatrical' phase was to follow in 1840. In 1827 he conceived a design for a department store, the first of its kind, which has a quite incredibly modern air, a construction 'that might quite well with certain very insignificant changes' be erected today. Equally revolutionary, though it is not one of his most successful efforts, is his 'Academy of Architecture' (*Bauakademie*) in Berlin. 'Till now the potentialities of an architecture that had completely freed itself from the fetters of tradition had never been demonstrated with such consistency of method—a method which avoided almost any approximation to the styles of the past.'[1] Other utilitarian structures of Schinkel's that derive from this time create an equally modern effect. But then utilitarian architecture, particularly in the case of factories, was in these years attaining its first high levels of achievement, though some of its examples were, of course, less happy than others. The creations belonging to this phase have as yet enjoyed inadequate scrutiny.

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[1] Ernst Jünger, *Das abenteuerliche Herz*, 2nd edition (Hamburg, 1938).

Everywhere now there is manifest a new will to 'truth'. Classicism appears as a 'style of lies', for men are only regarded as serving truth or as being sincere 'when they are creating something new; wherever they feel wholly sure of themselves their condition must be regarded as suspect, for then they know something absolutely, which means that something that is already there is only merely being re-exploited, and repetitively re-applied'. So writes Schinkel.

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[1] Wolfgang Herrmann, *Deutsche Baukunst des* 19. *und* 20. *Jahrhunderts,* I (Breslau, 1932)—by far the best account of architecture between 1770 and 1840. It is much to be regretted that the second part has not appeared.

This striving for 'truth' sets up a demand for genuineness of materials. It is felt to be intolerable that good coloured bricks should be concealed under a white covering of lime. For this reason there is a demand for honesty of construction. 'Bare walls which take on their character from the purpose they are intended to serve must not have that character concealed by fictional constructions.' Those are not the words of an architectural theorist of today. They were written by Hübsch in 1818.[1]

Fundamental 'truth' or 'truthfulness' means a quality of thought that is determined by the inherent needs of the job and one which pays no regard to monumental symmetry. So it comes that a tendency to ignore the requirements of symmetry becomes very marked in the thirties, particularly where the building of castles is concerned. The last suggestion of representational dignity thus begins to be lost. Schinkel's castles, Glienicke (1826) and Charlottenhof (1829), are not castles conceived on a reduced scale, but private country seats; they are in fact simply 'residences'. Another example of asymmetrical building is Hübsch's *Kunsthalle* (Hall of Art) of 1840, and even Klenze, the chief exponent of the tendencies here under attack, comes to a point in his Pantechnicon (1834) where considerations of symmetry tend to be ignored. In this unfettered style of design he joins himself for the first time to the advanced movement of his day.

The same striving after 'truthfulness', clarity and naturalness in the painting of the period can be seen in the work of Waldmüller (1793–1865) and Corot (1796–1875). The spiritual counterpart of this objective and human architecture however is not to be found in painting so much as in the new pictorial technique of the daguerrotype. Indeed, the very thing that delights us so much in the art of the thirties is really intrinsic to this early form of photography, for here too we find the combination of honesty and objectivity on the one hand and on the other a certain unaffected dignity. Indeed, the invention of photography in this decade is something of a symbol.[2]

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[1] Heinrich Hübsch, *In welchem Stil sollen wir bauen?* (Karlsruhe, 1828).

[2] Cf. Heinrich Schwarz, *David Octavius Hill* (Leipzig, 1931).

DOMESTIC BUILDING

The accent in domestic building is now on comfort and habitability. A liking for littleness comes into evidence, a tendency that in its own way is as important as the cult of 'truthfulness' referred to above. Even princely castles are affected by it. The castles of Schinkel, of which mention has just been made, are not only asymmetrical but quite unusually small. Even contemporaries were struck by the surprising smallness of the rooms.

The love of littleness is perhaps the most characteristic feature of the 'Biedermeier' period. The style to which we give this name represents only one aspect of the eighteen-thirties, but that aspect is very important. Its most significant manifestation is not in the utilitarian type of building but in domestic architecture, one might almost say in its effect on individual rooms; indeed, it causes the whole bourgeois cosmos to be contained within the framework of such a room.[1] Here are the beginnings of a new style of domestic living, which produces its own entirely original forms of 'comfortable' furniture. Among other things there appears the new phenomenon of upholstered furniture which has nothing but upholstery to show, all woodwork being made invisible, and the furniture stands about the room in wholly unsymmetrical groups.

The Biedermeier finds a new centre of unity for all the arts, that centre is the dwelling-house and the living-room. There would be no point in speaking of Biedermeier churches and Biedermeier palaces for in a sense these represent problems that have ceased to exist. The point of reference of all the arts is the private human being—the private human being not necessarily as a solitary figure, but as a man who has withdrawn himself from the public world outside.[2]

He is the new centre of things. As a private individual he has, of course, no public architecture, which now becomes the concern of civil servants, but he has a tasteful house and charming furniture. He has nothing that could be considered public sculpture—at best, he has here and there a solitary piece that might be considered to possess that character, as in the Stair Hall in Stifter's 'Rosenhaus'—a message from antiquity—but he collects the products of plastic art in miniature, such as cameos and coins. His pictures, unhistorical, unmythical, natural and 'veracious', are mere decorations on his walls. They are pictures which perhaps recall memories of the past or have some literary association, or they are views of nature, pleasantly tinged with sentiment—photographs almost, but photographs with spiritual values. His park shows nature in her kindliest and more intimate mood, and in it he 'takes his walk', an exercise that was valetudinarian rather than spiritual. His breviary is the anthology of the classics, a little music in the home serves the spiritual needs to which the private chapel had previously ministered and his 'inner cathedral' is the symphony.[1] The world is his dwelling-place (F. Heer).

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[1] F. Klauner, *Das Möbel des Biedermeier*, Vienna Dissertation (1941).

[2] Cf. W. Bietak, *Das Lebensgefühl der Biedermeier* (Vienna–Leipzig, 1931).

What all this means for him, how his enthusiasm for simple and beautiful things embraces everything from the fine graining of a wood to the highest values created by human genius and unites them in a subdued harmony—all this is nowhere better described than in Stifter's *Nachsommer*, a kind of self-portrait of this culture created when the culture was no more. In this world of happy domesticity, the fine arts were automatically allotted a secondary part, but this part they contrived to fill most adequately and wholly without pretence. The artist's audience being no longer the public as such, and the monumental having fallen into disfavour, the main stress now, as in seventeenth-century Holland, is on the transfer of the more ordinary scenes of life directly to the canvas and their transfiguration thereon. Faithfulness, and meticulous care, delicacy and charm—all of these are favourite phrases of the day—become the prime values. The more familiar and homely aspects of nature (whose greatness lies in her very tranquillity), life in a small circle, the vegetative existence of children and old people, the ordinary folk of the countryside, for whom history has brought so little change, the sunnier aspects of things seen every day—these are the artist's subject matter.[2]

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[1] Hans Sedlmayr, 'Österreichs bildende Kunst'. In *Österreich* edited by Josef Nadler and Heinrich von Srbik (Salzburg, 1936).

[2] Hans Sedlmayr, 'Die Rolle Osterreichs in der Geschichte der Deutschen Kunst' in *Forschungen and Fortschritte* (1937, No. 35/36).

Yet we do not understand this department of life, unless we grasp its relation to mythology, for the rejection of myth went hand in hand with the decline of historicism. Actually it was at this period that there began the devaluation of classical mythology through caricature. As the world becomes more and more objective and reduces all things to its own pedestrian level, so whatever was exalted in mythology is brought down to a petty scale, and is in the end demoted to the nursery; the myth lives on as a fairy-tale pure and simple, the saga of heroes becomes a bedtime story—and the God-man becomes the '*Christkind*'.[1]

The world of the child attains a quite unprecedented importance, toys and children's books reach an altogether new level of excellence. It is here in the kingdom of the children that the bourgeois world still feels a faint breath of the mythical. Its greatest feast is the feast of Christmas, which, as the feast of the '*Christkind*', now develops a special lustre of its own. Celebrated in every family's home, Christmas becomes the feast of the children *par excellence*. It is interesting to note that the year in which 'Silent Night, Holy Night' was composed was 1818.

For grown-ups humour and sentiment provide the myth's spiritual substitutes. The masters of European humour, such as Richter (1808), Charles Dickens and his illustrators, all belong to this decade, but it is a humour with distinctive atmosphere of its own; for the art these men possessed of transfiguring things by irony, of translating them into the grotesque and endowing them with the qualities of the fairy-tale, an art by which the demonic element (which ultimately found its outlet in political caricature) is minimized or is by that most characteristic irony dissipated—that art is not a thing existing in the void. It postulates the existence of the bourgeois, the atmosphere of the home, it postulates the existence of quaintness, of the little and of the intimate.[1] Even today the love of these things has not wholly disappeared, though the new upstarts have left very little room for it. In many parts of Europe this period set an example of gracious domestic living[2] that surpassed all that had gone before—nor did this hold true of Europe alone, for America too had its Biedermeier, and there as elsewhere it constituted the finest flowering of the art of the home and of a culture that had turned its visage away from public places and withdrawn itself into the intimacies of private life.

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[1] I have here preserved the original German word instead of giving the obvious English rendering of 'Christ-child'. The fact is that the '*Christkind*' is something rather different from the Infant Jesus, as he is known and worshipped by Christians, young and old the world over. The *Christkind*, though of course fundamentally identical with the Infant Jesus, is rather more a figure of folklore; one might almost describe it (though somewhat hesitantly) as a kind of baby Father Christmas. The author's point is thus a perfectly valid one. Long after the belief in the divinity of Christ has been lost by millions of people, the '*Christkind*' survived, and no doubt still survives, as part of the spiritual population of the German nursery.—*Translator.*

THE THEATRE

From the middle of the century the master problem is the theatre, which, especially when it takes the form of an opera house, represents a kind of rather novel Pantheon of the arts.

One gets the clearest understanding of the spirit which manifests itself in the theatres of the latter half of the nineteenth century if one sees them as the Dionysiac counterpart of the art temple, which is the museum—the latter of course coming under the empire of Apollo.

Neither of these constitutes a problem that is wholly new. The theatre as we know it is, like the art-form known as opera, a creation of the Baroque. Like the museum, it has broken away from the architecture of courts, in which it had had its origins; it now becomes an independent architectural job and in due course assumes primacy among the problems of the day.

The process had already set in in the late eighteenth century. The decisive phase, however, began to develop from 1840 onwards, expressing itself both in architecture—and here the work of Semper is the turning-point where a genuine new type comes into being—and also expressing in itself in the whole conception of the drama embodied in works and theorizings of Richard Wagner. The ground for such ideas had long been independently prepared in other departments of art—in painting, for instance, the more mature works of Delacroix had sought and recaptured the link with the Baroque.

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[1] W. Pinder, *Das Problem der Generation in der Kunstgeschichte Europas*, 2nd edition (Berlin, 1928).

[2] A. Wandruszka, 'Amerikanisches Biedermeier', in *Wort und Tat* (1946).

Men were again feeling their way towards a conception of an ideal composite work of art—a thing that had inspired the longings of the Romantic movement but had never been realized—and they were beginning to conceive of the theatre as a place of sacrament, an idea of which Bayreuth was to become the visible symbol. No one could deny that in the last-named we see the theatre putting forward sacramental pretensions.

Externally the new thing presents itself to us as a return to dynamism. It shows us a revival of the love for essentially sensual appeal, for colour and movement that is to say, and an attempted synthesis of all the senses in artistic experience. Such was the trend—the great comprehensive art form, which was the theatre, offered it the most grandiose scope.

Gilly's design for a theatre in 1800, in itself a magnificent piece of work, is still conceived in the idiom of the monument, though it is undoubtedly the first really modern theatre that was ever projected. Schinkel's Schauspielhaus in Berlin, which is dated 1819, contains innovations of a decisive kind which were to exercise considerable influence on the future, but displays a spiritual frigidity which is alien to the whole purpose of such a place. It is significant that the interior colour scheme was based on colours of lunar coolness—blue and silver—whereas all theatres of the period when the theatre really flourished were to cling to the glorious, sensual Baroque triad of white, red and gold.

Gottfried Semper (1803–1879) was the pioneer of the new epoch and there is clear evidence in his work of the tendency to liberate all the arts from the individual isolation to which the period round 1800 had relegated them. His first theoretical work, *Vorläufige Bemerkungen über die vielfarbige Architektur und Plastik bei den Alten* (Provisional Remarks on the Polychrome Architecture and Sculpture of Antiquity) (1834), is the thing that first sets off the change. It had been preceded by the work of his Parisian teacher Hittorf (1792–1867), *L'architecture polychrome chez les Grecs* (1830). Even here the author continually insists that one's thought should always clothe the bare buildings, which were all that had gone to make up the conventional 'classicist's' conception of antiquity, not only with the decorative painting, the metal ornaments and the gilding that embellished it, but that one must also visualize all the movable vessels and equipment and the effect created by the use of various textiles in the form of carpets, canopies and curtains, nay more—and this is most characteristic of the new instinct for artistic synthesis and for the dramatic—'the surroundings, the grouping of crowds, the priests and the solemn processions must all be taken into account as making up the picture as a whole'. Let us admit that Schinkel did much to bring about the transition, but it is only now that the picture of an antiquity came into being that was endowed with its proper element of colour, an antiquity that truly had the blood of life flowing through its veins. Once this vision of antiquity became clear, the art of the Renaissance and the Baroque was rediscovered, and antiquity, as the classicist saw it, receded into the background.

Semper's account of an antique temple reads like a description of some gorgeous show building of the new era, for it is a cardinal characteristic of this last that it should show this fusion of all the arts, and that in particular the applied arts and the arts of the decorator, the handicraftsmen and even of the scene-painter and stage manager, should play an increasing part in the ultimate effect. We can see the outlines of the new type of theatre in his first famous building of the Dresden Opera House (1838)—it was the second building of that opera house in 1869 that constituted the type's mature embodiment. The new and determining factor in this type of building lies less in its spatial composition and exterior form—to which there had been earlier approximations—than in this Dionysiac element with its synthesis of all the arts and its simultaneous appeal to all the senses. The first Dresden Opera House was one of the truly epoch-making buildings of the century.

It is now that the theatre becomes the master problem for leading architects, and it is plain that this was the main architectural preoccupation of the age. It was between 1840 and 1880–90 that most of the opera-houses in the world came into being and they did so in a form that remained valid down to our own day, for over a century, that is to say. The most important buildings by the great architects of the mid-century are theatres. Theatre building begins to display a magnificence which till then had only marked the palaces of kings: the Paris Opéra cost fifty million francs.

Even so architecture does no more than provide a sumptuous framework within which a composite work of art may be conserved and take shape, as take shape it did in elemental fashion in the work and the visions of Richard Wagner. Whatever one may feel about this man—and people have always felt passionately about him one way or the other—he is undoubtedly the genius of the century, and it is significant that he is neither an architect, a poet nor a painter but that synthetic hybrid thing the tone poet. In Wagner all the elements which are beginning to determine the form of the new architecture break through to the surface with incomparable power. Here we have the theatrical, the dramatic, the trend towards synthesis of the arts, the effort to bring all the different appeals that art can make to the senses into a single harmony; here we have passion, movement and colour; in a word, here we have the Dionysiac.

Wagner was conscious to an extraordinary degree of exactly what it was that he was seeking to achieve and in this he finds his counterpart in other artists of his day—both Semper and Delacroix theorized extensively about the arts they were practising—and actually we find in Wagner's writings, particularly in his *Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, which appeared in 1850, a definite account of the theatre's sacramental mission. It is in these writings that the idea of the comprehensive work of art is most forcefully expressed. The power that will father the art of the future lies, according to Wagner's view, not in architecture, but in the drama.

'The highest purpose of man's existence is the artistic one' (!). 'Man the artist can only be satisfied when all art forms unite to produce a common work of art.' 'The highest of all such common works of art is the drama. It can only achieve its maximum potential fullness if every art form is present within to the maximum potential of the art form concerned.' Thus the composite work of art which is the drama impresses into its service the two great triads of art, architecture, sculpture, painting, ballet, music and poetry.[1]

'So like maidens in some graceful dance, one ever completing the motion of the other, the various sister arts will display themselves and assert themselves, now all together, now in pairs, now each by itself, all conforming to the needs of the drama's action, by which alone they can be directed or restrained. In the composite work of art of the future not one of the really richly developed potentialities of any art will remain unused. On the contrary, here alone will it find the scope it deserves.'

The same trends that caused the theatre to be accounted the master problem of the age produce their irresistible effects in painting. It is the painting of Delacroix that corresponds to the Semper phase in architecture and the Wagner phase in music.[2]

Delacroix was born in 1798, five years ahead of Semper, fifteen ahead of Wagner. He was thus a contemporary of the Biedermeier generation; inwardly he already belonged to another world. His fundamental and instinctive sense of drama had been shown in his youthful work *Barke Dantes* (Dante's Barque) in 1821. It was he who single-handed brought about the change in the course of painting, causing it once more to strive for appeal to the senses, both in colour and subject. As to colour, it achieved a power never previously attained, not even by the Baroque, a power and a harmony suggestive almost of an orchestra with all instruments playing in concert. Its subjects were animals, women, riders, the hunt, fights and bloodshed.

In Delacroix we can already see that curious affection for the Oriental which is a mark of that epoch. It is not the Orient as we think of it today. There was for Delacroix and his contemporaries nothing passive or lethargic about it. It had, in a word, none of the qualities that Ingres professed to see in it. The Orient to the painters of the forties was luxuriant, sensual and voluptuous, a place of lowering passion and heat.

In Delacroix the link with the Baroque and the pre-Baroque zenith of the Renaissance has been re-established. This is something more than a mere borrowing of a few techniques. What we have here is a true second Renaissance—and the links are with Rubens, Veronese and Raphael. There is a revival of the painted ceiling, a thing integral to the greatest period of the Renaissance, and of the Baroque. The Salon du Roi and the Library in the Palais de Bourbon (1833–37 and 1838–47) are examples. Another is the Apollo Gallery at the Louvre.

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[1] Richard Wagner, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* (1850).

[2] F. Nietzsche, *Der Fall Wagner* (1888): *Delacroix eine Art Wagner.*

His famous picture 'Entry of the Crusaders into Constantinople', finished in 1840, appeared to Meier-Graefe as 'one of those victories which in the history of art resembles the great turning-points in the history of the world'. Meier-Graefe compares the importance of this picture to that of Watteau's '*Embarquement pour Cythère*' for the Regency and the Rococo. It produced the same results on that branch of painting which was connected with the theatre as a public institution—and on that branch alone—as were produced on Neo-Renaissance architecture by Semper's Opera House of 1838, the same effects as those produced on music by the work of Wagner.

Wagner, Semper and Delacroix are therefore the three significant names and there are a number of links between them. Wagner and Semper were friends, and the intention at first was to entrust Semper with the designing of the national 'Festspielhaus' in Munich (1864–66). As to Delacroix, his painting belongs in the matter of style to the epoch of Semper. A painted ceiling or curtain by Delacroix would aptly fit any of Semper's theatres and would indeed constitute for any of these a kind of crowning glory.

There is, moreover, a spiritual bond between Delacroix's painting and Wagner. Nietzsche saw this, as did that most inspired of all nineteenth-century art critics, Charles Baudelaire, who welcomed the art of both men with passionate enthusiasm.

In this first phase the movement has real depth; in its later phase, when its representatives were artists born in the thirties and forties, it begins to degenerate into the theatrical—in the worst sense of that word. Semper gives place to Hasenauer and Bruno Schmitz, Delacroix to Makart.

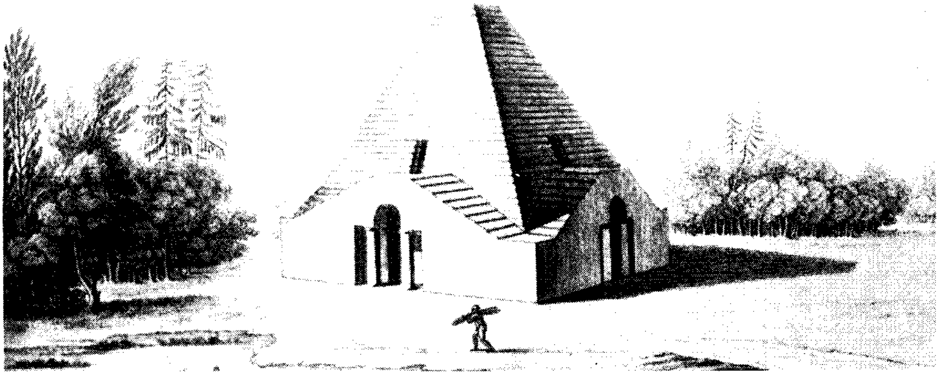
In this later period, in which external show has replaced inward depth, the theatrical infects all departments of life and art. In doing so it exhibits astonishing power and the result often has a kind of surface brilliance. It is the origin of nearly all of those things that we have in mind when we generalize about the nineteenth century or use the term 'the Eighties' in a derogatory sense. Yet with all its aberrations this phase is profoundly illuminating and a great help towards understanding the epoch as a whole. Much here still remains to be examined and we can only touch quite superficially on a few of the points.

Thus it was, in a very superficial way, a result of the theatre cult that the Chamber of Deputies in Paris should in 1848 have assumed the form of a theatre with a '*scenæ frons*' as a stage, the centre containing a painted prospect. One must, of course, remember that the parliamentary debates now themselves became something of a show, and that visitors crowded the galleries to witness these as eagerly as they watched the 'dramas' presented by the great sensational trials, trials which reached the fullness of their glory, so to speak, in the theatre's train.

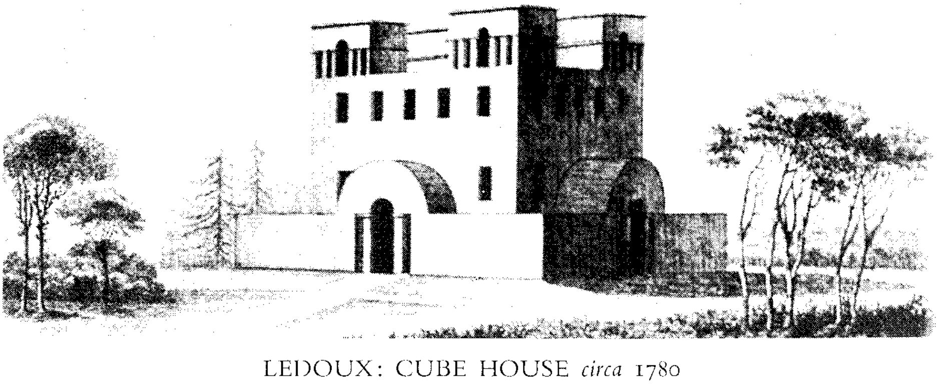
But architecture itself also indulges in play-acting. A characteristic expression of what may be called the 'theatrico-historical' is to be found in the buildings of Ludwig II. The apartments in the upper storey of the Munich Residenz were really half stage scenery and half diorama. The castles of Neu-Schwanstein (Hohenschwangau), Linderhof, Herrenchiemsee were born of the spirit of the theatre. Indeed they are something of a theatre themselves, pieces of three-dimensional stage scenery.

The theatre breaks into the private house with the 'show-piece' drawing-rooms of the nineteenth century. An interior like Makart's studio, which resulted in the popularizing of the Makart style of furnishing and decoration, is itself a 'dramatization' of Makart's personality. One detail is very significant: the oblique placing of furniture and movable objects in the room—a thing unknown to all other domestic styles—is originally a principle of the late Baroque theatre (*scena al angolo*).

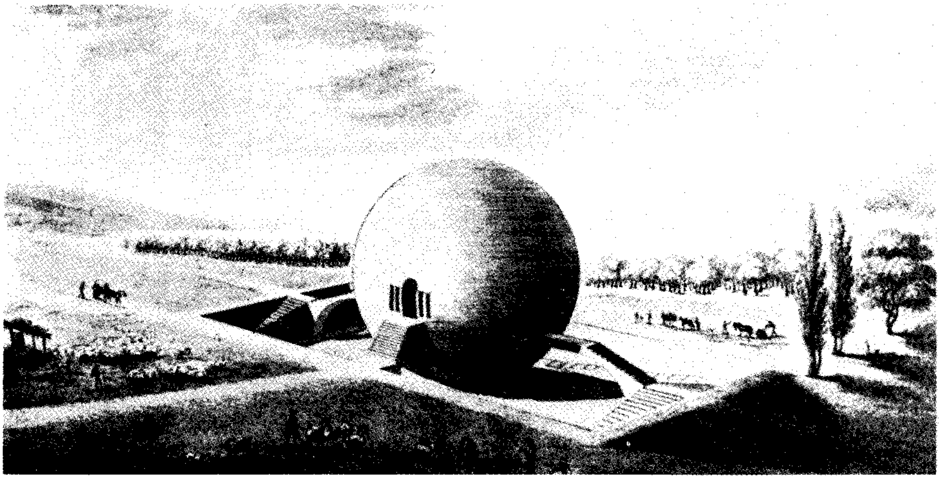
What is particularly striking, and indeed almost embarrassing to see, is the way the theatrical invades domains that are wholly



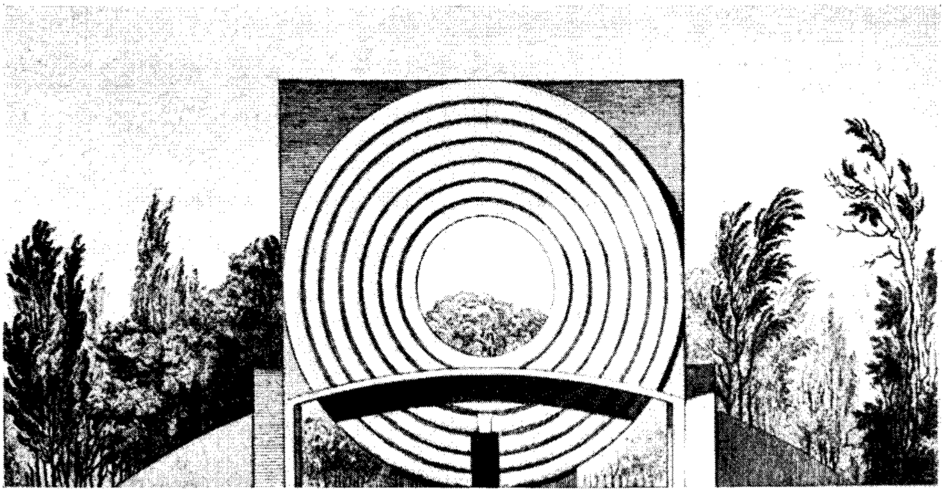
LEDOUX: CHARCOAL KILN IN THE FORM OF A PYRAMID
'The new dogma: the geometrical basic forms are also the basic architectural forms.'
(*See page* 98.)



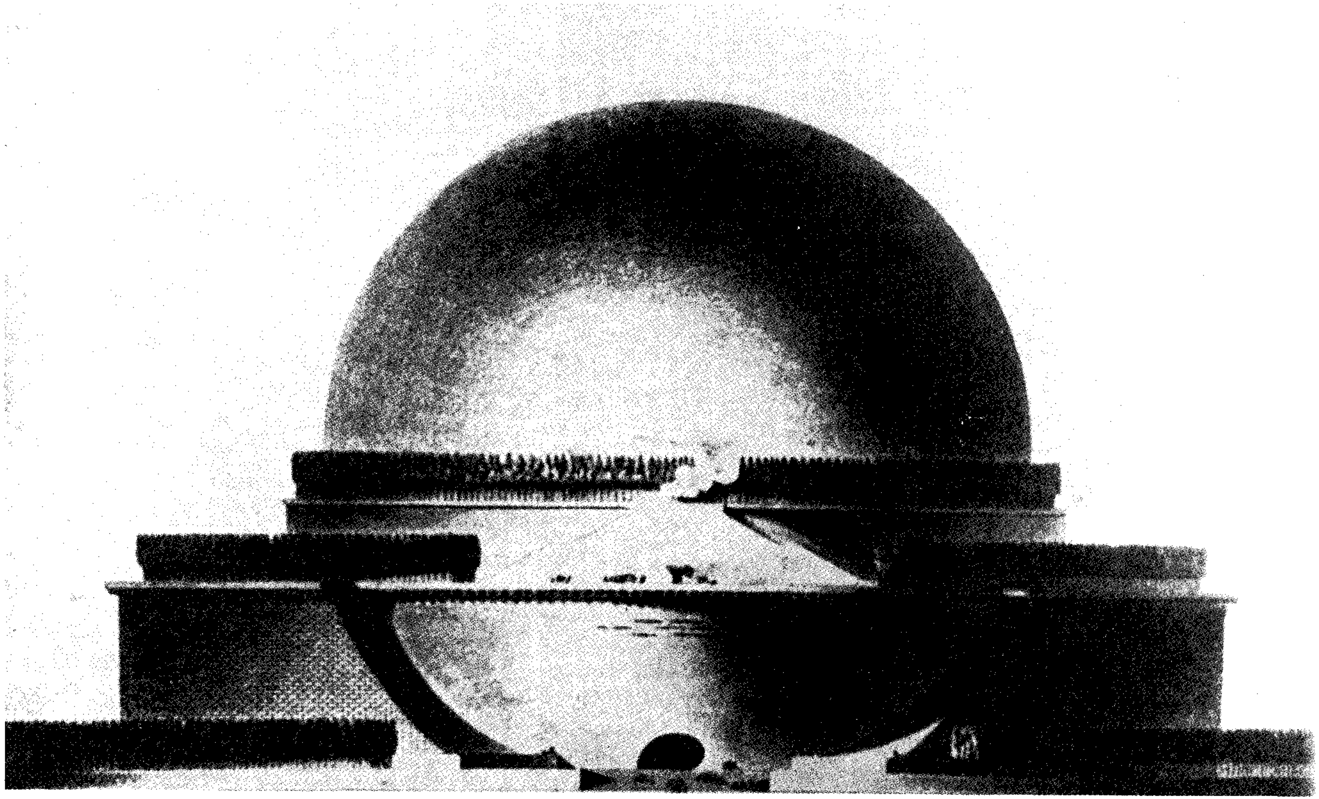
LEDOUX: CUBE HOUSE *circa* 1780
'Long before concrete existed we have the typical concrete forms.' (*See page* 100.)



LEDOUX: SPHERICAL HOUSE FOR A BAILIFF before 1778
'The monumental has a tendency to invade every department of plastic creation.'
(*See page* 22.)

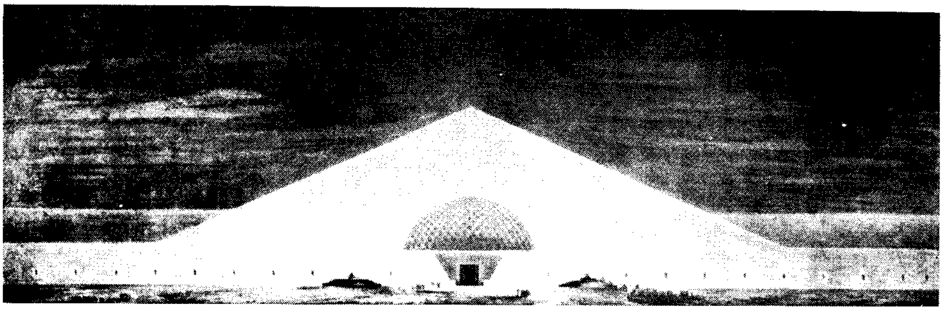


LEDOUX: CIRCULAR HOUSE FOR A WHEELWRIGHT
Architecture parlante: the shape of a house revealing its function. (*See page* 69.)

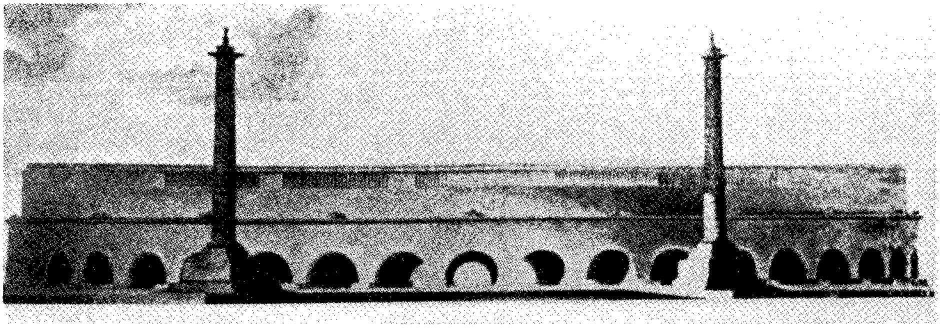


BOULLÉE: CENOTAPH FOR NEWTON

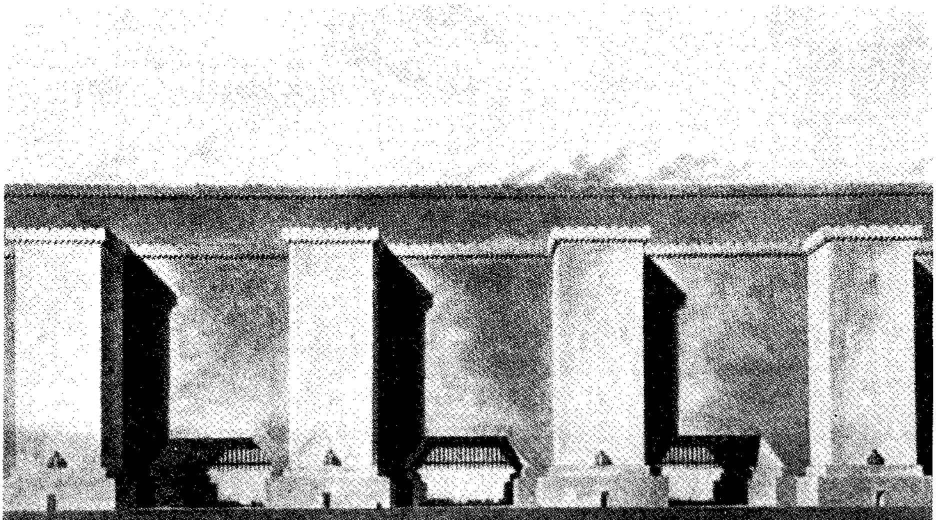
'There appeared around 1780 a new master problem, that of the architectural monument. It seeks unbroken planes, the power of mass, it seeks after solemn repose and for an expression of the eternal and indestructible.' (*See page* 21.)



MAUSOLEUM IN A HALF PYRAMID



STADIUM FOR 300,000 SPECTATORS



CITY GATE

All designed before 1799. 'The monument casts that stark spell upon the soul which is begotten by grandeur surpassing the human scale—the megalomania of the time.' (*See page* 21.)

alien to it. One can see this if one compares the shape taken by monuments in the latter half of the nineteenth century with the 'pure' monuments of the year 1820. The supreme example of an architectural monument under theatrical influence is Bruno Schmitz's monument on the Kyffhäuser Hill. 'The romantic grouping of the court at the foot of the tower and the enthroned figure of Barbarossa is theatre and very vile theatre at that' (H. Schrade). Even simple plastic monuments become veritably theatricalized—the one at Dalou is a good example.

In Wagner's view the painter's highest task is the creation of the stage picture. A caricature of this idea is the considerable popularity enjoyed at that time by the Cosmorama and the Diorama. These were circular pictures in which the painted background passed over, as on the stage, to a plastic foreground. A further stage of the process is the use of theatrical effects at picture shows. For instance, when Payer's gigantic 'No Return' was exhibited, which shows the members of the Austrian polar expedition in a dramatic group under the polar night, the room was kept in darkness and the illusion was heightened by a wind machine.

A great part of the narrative and historical pictures of the late nineteenth century have the effect of stage groupings and stage tableaux. In many cases one really does not know whether the picture professes to represent the actual scene itself or its representation in a theatre.

The theatrical has rightly been regarded as a fundamental element of the Baroque, and the task remains to be undertaken of distinguishing the particular element in question as it appears in the Baroque and the Renaissance from a similar element in the Neo-Renaissance and the Neo-Baroque.

An attempt to distinguish between these two will bring the enquirer up against the problem of the actor and the peculiar characteristics of the actor's bearing and outlook, the problem, in a word, of the 'histrionic'. This is the age in which the professional actors flourish. Never before had they been accorded so high a social position. But in this phase of history there is a more profound and more general sense than this in which we can speak of the actor as a leading figure, a fact which was thoroughly grasped by both Nietzsche and Kierkegaard.[1]

There is a close connection between the problem of the actor and that of make up, mask and facial disguise, all, in fact, that pertains to the element of make-believe and masquerade, and this too is the key to many of the phenomena of this period.

The epoch reached its culminating point in 1860 and really came to an end with Wagner's death in 1883. The rediscovery of the art of the Baroque by Burckhardt in 1875 was primarily a matter for those who had an academic interest in the history of art; moreover, it occurred at a time in which modern trends were already becoming paramount and were leading artistic fashion in a very different direction. Nevertheless that epoch produced a kind of belated second spring, a thing rounded and complete in itself, of which the most characteristic and dominant figures were Richard Strauss—Hofmannsthal—Reinhardt, the composer, the poet and the stage manager, and through this trinity it reaches out into our own day.

Actually this second spring is in a sense a purer thing than the original flowering, for the subjects of these operas—Strauss' *Ariadne* for instance—are far more in harmony with the idea of the Dionysiac drama as a composite work of art than the Nordic themes of Richard Wagner. It is still the Baroque sphere from which this art takes its nourishment, nor is it mere chance that it seeks a Baroque city as its framework.[2] But today it is no longer a power that has a formative influence on life as a whole; that influence is confined to the theatre, nor does the drama any longer profess to have a sacramental character even of something of its previous exaltation to the level of a sacrament is reflected in the practice of having theatrical performances in church—a practice in which church and theatre may be considered as combining in a common effort. Admittedly, also, the visits to the Salzburg Festival performances were still regarded in the nineteen-twenties as having the character of 'æsthetic pilgrimages'. But the theatre has long ceased to be the master problem of our age.

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[1] F. Nietzsche, *Der Fall Wagner*, particularly sections 11 and 12.

[2] Salzburg.—*Translator.*

THE EXHIBITION

> *It is now that the new economic circumstances will come into being, and they will be completely worked out, calculated with mathematical precision. . . . Then a crystal palace will be built.*—F. M. DOSTOEVSKI, *Out of the Darkness of the Great City*, 1864.

If we choose to speak, not only of the achievements of art, but also of the factors which tend to endanger it, we can no more leave the exhibition out of account, in a history of nineteenth-century art, than we can, in forming an estimate of the Roman art of that day, leave out of account those curiously equivocal constructional monstrosities, the imperial thermæ.[1] In a certain sense it presents the all-out opportunity for the engineer, and indeed the engineer now in a certain sense becomes the architect's rival. Like the great theatre, it is one of the most powerful symbolic expressions of the capitalist epoch with its chaos of forces and counter-forces.

It is in the exhibition that the architecture of glass and steel, which had been coming into being since the end of the eighteenth century, finds its first great tasks. Exhibitions become 'creative' exponents of the new building industry, they provide engineering architecture with its most essential, though by no means with its only task, as the theatre provides the most essential task to the architect in his capacity of artist. Like the theatre, the exhibition is, taken as a whole, a composite thing. Undeniably also it is a thing that has its roots in the ground, but it is also something visionary; it tends to call up a vision of a world in which a new kind of movement has been set going, the vision of the world as the age of industry sees it.

By and large then the story of the exhibition is the story of buildings made of glass and iron.[2]

Building in iron begins with the building of bridges and it does so on English soil, its commencement synchronizing with the new revolutionary architecture of France; one of its landmarks is the bridge over the Severn completed in 1773, the date of Ledoux's spherical house.

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[1] On the imperial thermæ, cf. H. Sedlmayr, *Le terme imperiali romani.* A review of Krencker's book on the imperial thermæ at Trèves in the periodical *Palladio* (1935).

[2] A. G. Meyer, *Eisenbau* (Ebingen, 1907).

The iron and glass technique of construction has its roots in two different fields. It makes its first appearance in the airy domain of the roof-tops and over warehouses—particular fame in this connection attaches to Bellanger's 'Halle aux Blés' in Paris, a tiled rotunda with a dome of glass and iron. It also appears in theatre auditoria, galleries and machine-shops.

Constructions consisting wholly of glass and iron as such first appear in the form of conservatories, then in that of market halls, and it is significant that there is a considerable development of them in the pedestrian and objective thirties. An early example of iron construction, which has already achieved the character of great lightness, is to be found in the Paris 'Jardin des Fleurs' in 1833. In 1838 Paxton's famous glass house came into being; it was built at Chatsworth for the Duke of Devonshire, while the designs of that man of genius, Hector Horeau, a revolutionary figure comparable to that of Ledoux, show the lines of future development.[1] In 1837 Horeau designed an exhibition hall of colossal dimensions, and in 1848 his market hall, which was to have a span of two hundred and sixty feet.

The general conception of these secular cathedrals of glass and iron was hardly ever to be surpassed. The fantastic and supposedly exaggerated features in these projects, their vast dimensions, which could only be translated into reality half a century later, seem to show that the idea is beginning to get out of control. All the same this first marriage of the idea of an exhibition with this new industrial art of the ironfounder is a thing which must not be overlooked. It is dictated by something other than purely practical considerations. There is behind it a real enthusiasm for the new material and its potentialities. Far-seeing men like Boetticher (1846) are not slow to grasp the significance of these things. 'In the moment in which architects start making use of the new materials which industry has made available a new architecture will have come into being.' Thus the romantic theorist Gautier in 1850.

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[1] Jeanne Doin, 'Hector Horeau', in *Gazette des Beaux Arts* (1914), p. 11.

The idea of the great exhibitions came into being at the same time as the beginnings of the new construction technique, namely, at the time of the French Revolution. The World Exhibition followed about the middle of the nineteenth century. 1851 was the date of the first industrial exhibition of all nations in London; it was not important as an exhibition alone, but also as a landmark in the development of glass and iron construction, and the very name of Paxton's 'Crystal Palace' betrays the new sentiment that gave a colouring to these things in men's minds. Each of the other 'World Exhibitions'—they were held in Paris, 1855, 1867 and 1878—shows a further stage of progress; finally the World Exhibition of 1889 with its two centres of attraction, the huge machine hall by Cottancin and Ducert and the Eiffel Tower achieved something like a high-water mark. Steel, by the way, had begun to replace iron since 1860.

Cottancin's machine hall, which combined a height of forty-three metres (which is the height of Amiens Cathedral) with a breadth of a hundred and ten metres, acts on the mind like the focal point of a new conception of æsthetics and crystallizes all the deepest tendencies of the age:

1. A new lightness—a passion for things that seem to float in the air. The building no longer rests on supports that can be felt and seen as solid objects, but rather on points without magnitude. It has the character of something spun and is irradiated on all sides by the light that breaks in on it, a light that seems actually to dissolve its last delicate constituent elements.

2. A new plenitude of light in an as yet undreamed of abundance; one might almost speak of an adoration of the element of natural light. Quantity here changes into quality, according to the Hegelian formula. Such a quantity of profane light is almost a hallowed thing. People who did not know the purpose of this hall of light, might almost take it for the church of a new light-cult.

3. The turning of the interior into a single vast unit of overwhelming, one might almost say, cosmic dimensions which reduce man to a dwarf.

4. The favouring of a vast span of great breadth, the flattened curve of which starts at ground-level—the stressing of width in contradiction to the Gothic which stressed height, the stress on this feature being deliberate, though it does of course serve a practical end.

5. Since the whole building is confined within a transparent skin of glass, there is no real delimiting boundary between the building itself and the world without. The interior remains merely a circumscribed part of infinite outer space, a thing that could never be said of a Gothic church. The building is now a transparent tent; it is the diametrical opposite of the crypt or cave within the ground. And indeed a kind of nomad spirit has made its appearance, for these constructions can easily be dismantled and transported from one place to another, like circus tents, as this same London Crystal Palace was transported from Hyde Park to Sydenham. What is lacking in these edifices is the notion of the separating wall or boundary between himself and the outer world which expresses man's individual assertion of himself against the universe around him.

It is worth reflecting on the contrast between this kind of architecture and that of the theatre, a cave-like thing turned wholly inward upon itself, and wholly dependent on artificial lighting. The contrast with the nocturnal sepulchral and subterranean architecture of the new primitives round eighteen hundred is equally striking.

Despite the differences of principle, noted above, between the new steel and iron architecture and the Gothic, it is nevertheless true that the potentiality of such an 'unearthly' architecture was already inherent in the latter, and there is a sense in which the new creations may be looked upon as a secularization of the Gothic. Indeed, one might be able to trace a kind of family tree going down through the centuries. In English architecture of the sixteenth century we often find walls that have resolved entirely into a grill consisting of thin staves of stone: these walls constitute the framework of large glass windows. We might well look upon this as the connecting link.

It is true, of course, that iron is out of harmony with the very nature of Gothic architecture, for the latter conceived of its jewelled cathedrals as being built up '*vivis ex lapidibus*'. Even so one can understand that the Gothic and the new glass and iron construction did tend to effect a sort of meeting with one another. Schinkel actually believed that iron was a suitable material for Gothic buildings, while Viollet-le-Duc, that great though somewhat ill-starred renovator of the Gothic buildings of France, conceived of a Gothic framework in a manner which almost suggests that he had a construction of iron in mind.[1]

In Cottancin's machine hall the French spirit for the third time translated into reality a tremendous vision of light, the previous instances being the cathedral and the light-world of Versailles. It is an incomprehensible piece of barbarism, and a heavy loss to us all, that this great symbol of the advent of a new epoch should have been dismantled in 1910.

There is a spiritual kinship between this *plein-air* school of architecture and the *plein-air* school of painting with its cult of bright shimmering natural light. The palace of glass is the latter's natural home. Incidentally, this new school of painting shares with the engineer his habit of patient observation and his method of resting on scientific knowledge. And it is something more than mere coincidence that Manet, the leading figure of this new school, should have painted the first picture of such an exhibition; it was he who painted the World Exhibition of 1867.

It is incidentally in this particular exhibition that the idea of making an exhibition into a unitary and comprehensive work of art is most clearly in evidence. The nucleus of the affair was an exotic garden, showing plants from all over the world; around it in seven concentric circles were halls of glass and iron, the height of which increased the further they were removed from the centre. These halls displayed in one way or another the products of the various skills of every nation, the inner ring being devoted to the five arts, the outer ring forming the empire of the machine. One segment of these sevenfold rings belonged to each country concerned, so that all participated on an equal footing.

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[1] Cf. Pol Abraham, *Viollet-le-Duc et le rationalisme médieval* (Paris, 1934).

The symbolic content of this Pantheon of art and industry, this temple of the inventive genius of man, was very considerable indeed, and those who planned the exhibition were intensely conscious of it. In the text of the official publication on the exhibition we find the following: 'To make the rounds of this palace means literally to circle the earth. All peoples are come together here; and those who are enemies, here live side by side. The divine spirit hovers over this planetary circle of iron as once at the beginning of all things it hovered over the waters.' Thus the exhibition is at one and the same time a picture of the world and a *visio pacis*.[1]

Two things should finally be called to mind, if we wish to see the exhibition as a whole and familiarize ourselves with its spirit. They are the organized festivities which themselves became famous and the art of Chéret's posters. It is now that the 'screaming' picture makes its appearance.

It is thus in these exhibition halls that the new architecture first assumes tangible form, and it is an ambitious début, nor is it long before the new technique has adapted itself to the more traditional of architectural requirements. In the Belgian royal palace at Laeken a conservatory constructed in the aforementioned fashion was turned into a church. The New Museum at Oxford provides an example of the conquest by the new materials of yet another province. The museum is designed as a hall consisting entirely of iron and glass—though with Gothic detail. The 'Glaspalast' of Munich also falls into this category. In the realm of monuments the typical form assumed is that of the Eiffel Tower, a monument which the inventive spirit of man erected to itself. The Eiffel Tower also provides the first instance of a steel girder structure wholly devoid of any practical purpose. This trespass beyond its lawful sphere shows that the whole conception was already in decay, and indeed it never really improved on its original creations. The transformation of the dwelling-house into a construction consisting wholly of glass and iron was to follow later.

The spirit of the exhibition did not remain confined to the institution which it principally informed but passed on to every province of life, and, for that matter, the forms and ideas of the new type of construction had an equally far-reaching effect. But the spirit of the exhibition was a curiously hybrid thing, in which an honestly objective outlook blended with a passion for décors, an itch for thrills, a marked addiction to the theatrical, and a growing susceptibility to the sideshow-barker's type of showmanship, and this was not without its consequences, for it was the same spirit which created among other things the art of window-dressing—that is, of designing exhibitions in miniature. That spirit created all the potentialities of the poster, it created the pyrotechnics of sky signs. The floodlighting of buildings now customary in every city in Europe, and of plants in parks and gardens (and even of works of art in museums) belongs to the spirit of the exhibition and not to that of the museum. It penetrates the theatre giving us our super productions and our revues, and introduces there yet another element of the exhibition—the spotlight. Gardens are now also among the things that take on the characteristic of an exhibition, the character indeed of the plantings seen on an exhibition ground. We may take as our example the park of Buttes-Chaumont near Paris, laid out in 1867 by Alphand, with its sensational motifs.

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[1] Cf. S. Giedion, *Bauen in Frankreich, Eisenbeton* (Leipzig-Berlin, no date) and the official two-volume publication of 1867.

Here in the exhibition we see for the first time the new surrogates for art, man's restless hunger for beauty is drugged with a regimen of spectacles and stunts, he hankers increasingly after the 'stupendous', the 'colossal', the 'greatest ever' and whatever else can be described by the Corybantic superlatives of the litany of Ballyhoo.

The decay of the exhibition dates as far back as the World Exhibition of 1900, though there is still progress in certain isolated departments. The poster reaches a new pinnacle of excellence under Toulouse-Lautrec and thereafter goes from strength to strength, while the development of electricity opens up vast new possibilities in the art of illumination.

But the purest examples of the exhibition, and the most satisfying, both in content and form, only appeared when the exhibition had ceased to be an international institution and an international force, when in fact it was modestly withdrawing into its own parochial sphere. Asplund's Stockholm exhibition in 1930 is the example here.[1]

THEATRE AND EXHIBITION

There is close kinship between the exhibition and the nineteenth-century theatre—different as the two things may appear. They are the two great comprehensive artistic tasks in the age of art and industry—a combination of words that is curiously characteristic of this double visaged time. Both institutions begin to flourish exactly at the same time. The leading spirits of engineering construction, Paxton (1801–65) and Horeau (1801–72) are exact contemporaries of Semper. Eiffel (born 1832) and the impressionists constitute the second generation. In both cases the sons refuse to be 'idealist' like their fathers, they see themselves in a 'positive' light. Both are concerned with a public thing, they speak to the public, and do so, as it were, at the top of their voices. These two forces, like two millstones, grind away what little is left of the nineteenth century. Of the peace and quiet of its first fifty years nothing now remains.

THE HOUSE OF THE MACHINE

Around 1900 the 'House of the Machine' becomes the master problem. Now for the first time leading artists begin to design garages, factories, railway stations. Somewhat later they give their attention to the aeroplane hangar. Perret, Tony Garnier, Peter Behrens and F. L. Wright are some of the names. In 1889 Octave Mirbeau had prophetically remarked: 'The renewal is not being prepared in the studios of sculptors and painters but in the factories.' Buildings now come into being which even today are felt to be classical within the limits of their kind and purpose. Examples are Peter Behrens' famous turbine factory for the *Allgemeine Elektrische Gesellschaft* in Berlin, Perret's garage in the rue Ponthieu in Paris, Freyssinet's aviation hall in Orly, the Fagus Works of Gropius.

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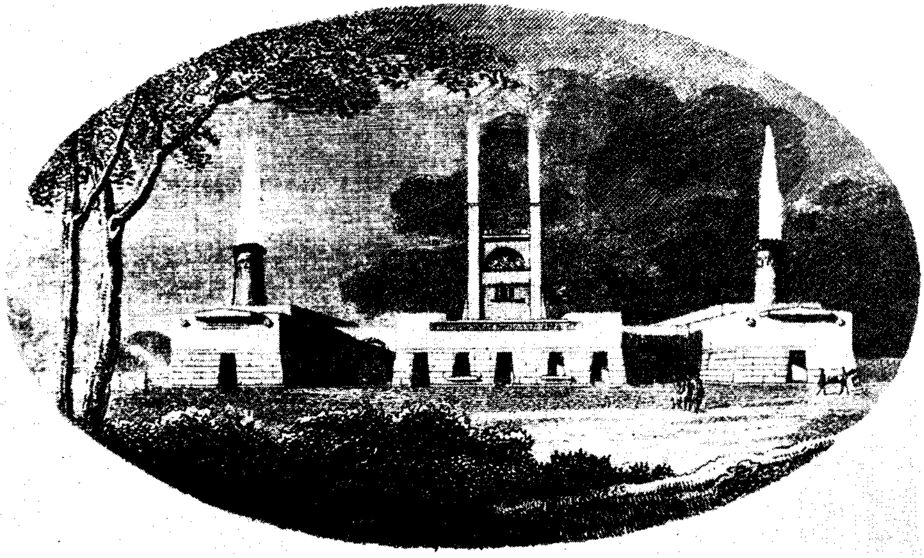
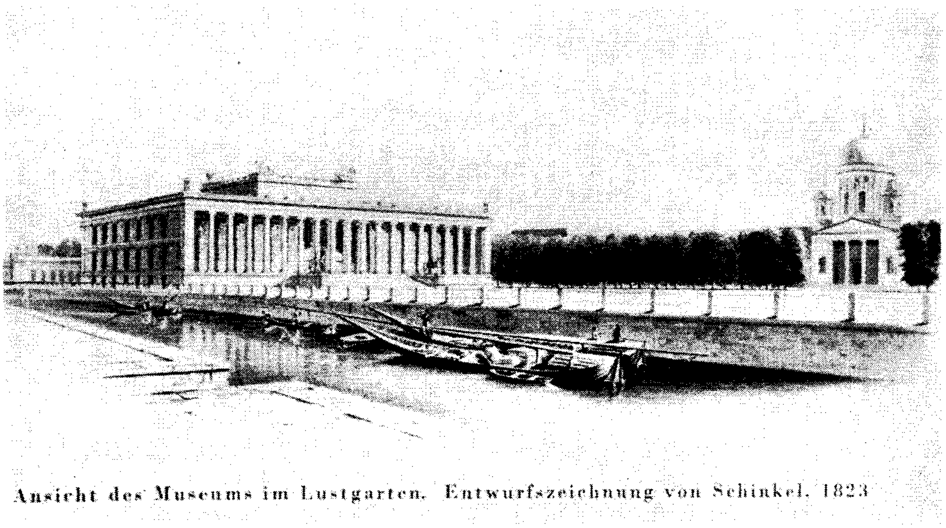
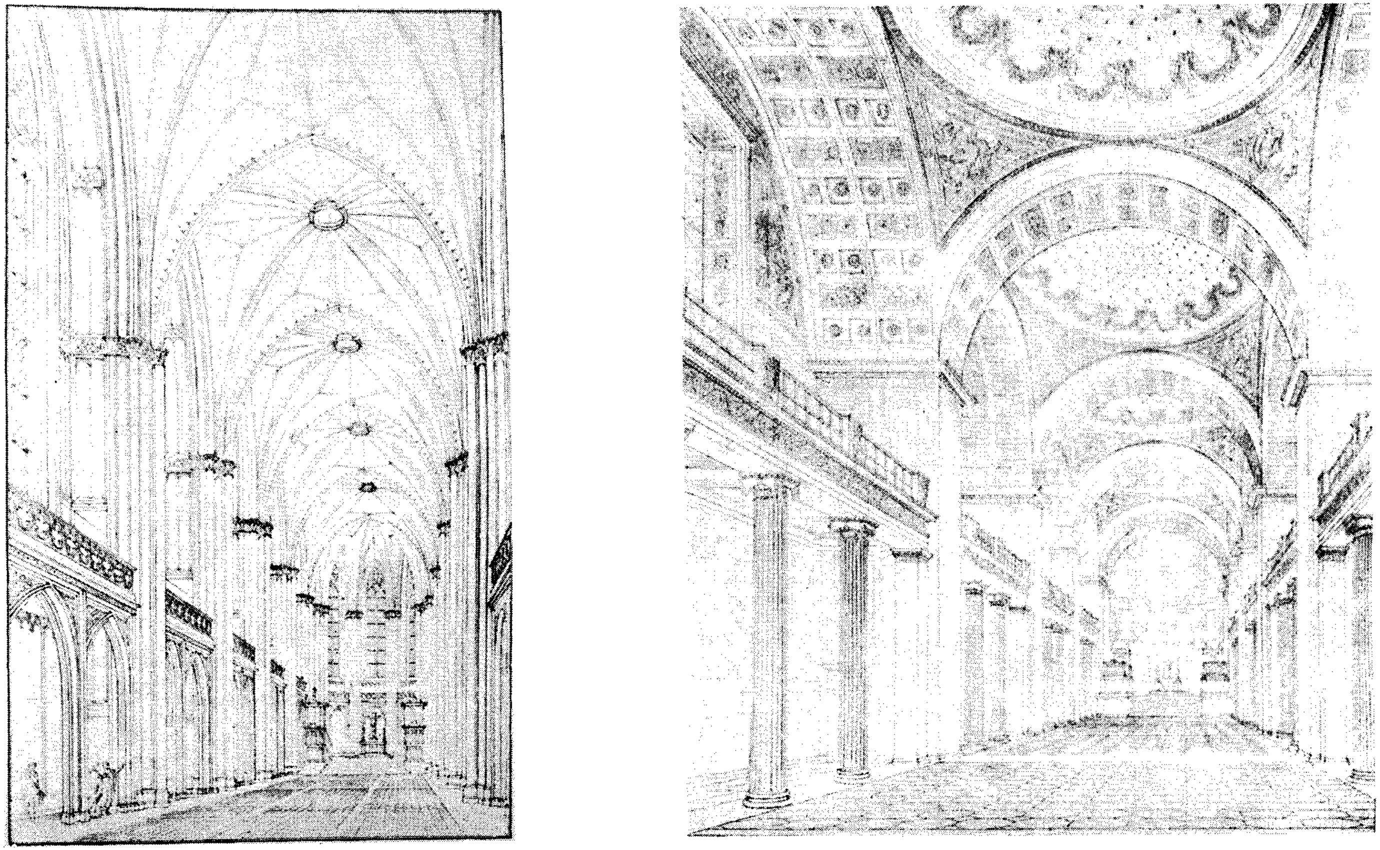
[1] Cf. H. Sedlmayr, 'Die Kugel als Gebäude oder das Bodenlose' in *Das Werk des Künstlers* (1939), p. 308. Also *Der Städtebau* (1930) and *Schweizerische Bauzeitung* (1930), pp. 143 ff.



GILLY: DESIGN FOR A BLAST FURNACE, 1804
'Gilly designs a furnace that is like a monument to the elemental forces of nature.'
(*See page* 22.)


Ansicht des Museums im Lustgarten. Entwurfszeichnung von Schinkel. 1823

SCHINKEL: ALTES MUSEUM IN BERLIN
The museum as a temple of art, the 'æsthetic church'. 'For that generation art really meant something holy. A few decades later the museum had ceased to play that semi-sacramental rôle.' (*See page* 28.)



SCHINKEL: TWO DESIGNS FOR THE WERDERSCHE KIRCHE IN BERLIN, 1824–1825

'The basic cubic shape has remained unchanged, but it is dressed up, it is masked to suit the changing whim of the beholder, It is in the factory and office buildings that the determining features of the new architecture show themselves most clearly and with the minimum of disguise; moreover, to glass and steel there is now added a new material, as neutral, hard and anti-plastic as these—concrete and ferro-concrete. This not only brings new potentialities of construction in its train, but an entirely new character of its own.[1] It is in the factory that what men are aiming at can best be seen. The essential features of their style are these:

1. The interior remains a single unit which can subsequently be subdivided at will. Within this interior platforms can be erected at various levels and then removed as convenience may dictate.
2. A profusion of light.
3. The predominance and even the exclusive use of the coldest and hardest materials.
4. The rejection of the monumental, and the effort to achieve the effect of economy and lightness of construction, the element of beauty deriving from the skilful use of simple broad and airy surfaces.

All these features derive from the very purpose and function of the factory itself, but they are also the expression of a peculiar and distinctive mood and of a certain definite æsthetic ideal, and this ideal makes its influence felt in other departments of life and art. There is in fact a clear content of sentiment in the rigid logic of pure functionalism, and that sentiment in due course becomes articulate in the person of Le Corbusier.

The work of bringing the new movement to fruition belongs to two generations. The older one, born around 1860, preached the new gospel most unequivocally when it was concerned with buildings that were buildings of pure utility and nothing more. When it attempted to transfer the ideas developed in these last to other tasks, it was hesitant. It continued to apply the monumental idiom to theatres and other public buildings. Indeed there is still a certain amount of residual lumber from the monumental in the machine-shop, already alluded to, which Peter Behrens designed for the *Allgemeine Elektrische Gesellschaft*, and the most advanced of the architects of this generation, Adolf Loos, continued to admit the suitability of the monumental for certain specific jobs.

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[1] S. Giedion, *Bauen in Frankreich, Eisenbeton* (Leipzig–Berlin, n.d.).

The second generation, which was born in 1885, a crop of births with a remarkably distinctive character of its own, still finds a few dregs of the monumental left for it to absorb. In the main, it transfers the ideas expressed in utilitarian architecture to all building jobs of any kind at all, a policy which may argue a certain egalitarian proclivity, but shows little feeling for the artistic facts of life. Dwelling-house, theatre, palace and church are all equally affected. Many buildings in their outward appearance are indistinguishable from factories—Gropius' 'Bauhaus' in Dessau, for instance, or the palace designed by Le Corbusier for the League of Nations at Geneva, which might be an ordinary office building. Round 1920 we have theatres being designed which could at any time be taken for garages, and actually a church belonging to this period was spoken of by people as a *Seelengarage* ('Soul-garage').

But the matter goes further; the terminology of the factory is quite officially transferred to any building designed in the new fashion. Bolshevik theory, to quote an extreme case, sees a 'powerhouse' in a village club. In the purely practical sphere this root and branch levelling process expresses itself in the habit of mass producing standardized parts, the intention being that the same window shall fit a mansion, the Palace of the League of Nations or a home for the destitute.

But the approximation by other types of building to the factory ideal goes far beyond the incorporation in the former of certain motifs that are naturally germane to ferro-concrete. It is a matter of the spirit which now informs all types of building alike. The phenomenon is most striking in the case of the dwelling-house, 'which has always shown itself particularly reluctant to accept new forms'.[1] In houses designed by Le Corbusier and men of his school, we find the individual rooms beginning to lose their defining boundaries; they are only separated from each other by partitions at half height. This is a clear case of the transfer of a constructional principle from the factory, where, as we have seen, the fashion now is to have a unitary interior subdivided according to need.

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[1] S. Giedion, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

A similar judgement might be passed on the use of factory materials in the furnishing and equipping of a home—*e.g.* steel, chromium, aluminium, nickel and webbing—a practice most certainly informed by a quite specific quality of sentiment. Logically the thing can only be justified where this particular æsthetic ideal has some connection with the purpose of the actual room, and this might well hold good of the bathroom or the kitchen, for these last to some extent constitute exceptions to rule in so far as they may be regarded as being in the nature of laboratories. Logically also the use of such materials can be defended in places where they are spiritually appropriate—in a hospital, for instance, where man is demoted to the status of a purely physical entity, but in rooms which by their very nature are destined to serve man in his capacity of a complete human being, the thing simply doesn't work out, even though a certain visual charm may actually be achieved; for what such practices almost imply is that man should so transform himself, that he fits into the realm of the machine.

From the point of view of their external form, pictures and sculptures of the 'constructivist' school would appear to fit such rooms very well. Constructivism seeks to fit painting and sculpture into the purely rational sphere of architecture. However, 'contrary to the opinion of the artists themselves, there is in the case of the constructivists only very rarely any question of rationality. Mathematicians, physicists and engineers have on the whole little use for this particular form of fun. The thing is really an attempt to give pictorial expression to the qualities of the machine.[1] A constructivist picture would be wholly out of place in a factory. Into that particular sphere there belong genuine constructional drawings, diagrams, a certain kind of photography and a certain kind of poster, for these exhibit a kindred outlook to that of the factory itself.

[1] Franz Roh, *Nachexpressionismus* (Leipzig, 1925), pp. 14 and 15.

In examining this whole process whereby the solution of the higher problems tends to adapt itself to that of the lower ones, we cannot but be struck, if our examination is really profound, by a veneration and enthusiasm, almost religious in quality, which the age displays for its new idol, the machine. Le Corbusier in a few short telling sentences sings the hymn of the machine as follows:

'The machine, the symbol of the modern age, achieves in the world a reformation of the spirit. We must reflect that we are the first generation that sees the machine. The machine shows our eyes the gleam of sheets, balls and cylinders of polished steel, cut with a precision which nature has never displayed. The machine is all geometry. Geometry is our great creation and it delights us. *Man* (who creates machines) *acts like a God in his perfection.*' It is the age in which the idea of the machine-man, the 'robot', appears. '*L'uomo si evolva verso la macchina*' (U. Boccioni).

SUMMARY

The manner in which all problems are at every stage influenced by the master problem is shown very clearly by the monument.

At the stage of the landscape garden the monument is a 'grove'. A memorial made up of trees appears to be the highest and most worthy embodiment of the monumental idea. In Ermenonville and Woerlitz a circle of poplars constitutes a monument to Rousseau built up out of natural elements.

At the next stage the monument itself becomes the master problem, its ideal being expressed in the imperishable nature of huge stereotomic bodies.

At the museum stage it takes on the character of a museum; Walhalla being the classic example, while at the theatre stage it becomes theatrical.

At the exhibition stage the monument takes on the form of pure construction. In this form it pays tribute to the inventive genius of man. The example here is the Eiffel Tower.

At the factory stage it takes on forms that are native to the machine. A spherical auditorium is designed as a monument for Lenin. If we did not know its purpose, for what should we take this thing? Probably for a transmitting stage of a solar power generator or for something of a similar kind.

This process of adaptation could be shown to be at work in every kind of job, even in churches.

The sequence in which the rôle of master problems passes from one task to another reflects the coming of the new spirits, the spirits which have taken the place of a personal God and of the Divine Personality.

At first we have the worship of nature under two forms, that of the garden and of Elysium, and that of the elemental nature of the starry skies. Nature can thus be an ever-changing thing, or a thing that endures for ever, and never breaks its everlasting rest. It can be everlasting as the changing seasons are everlasting or it can have the eternity of granite.

Next there follows the worship of art, and this too is in two forms—one static Apollonian, the museum, and one that is dynamic and Dionysiac, the theatre. The real religion now is æstheticism, and its last flowering is the *fin du siècle*.

Next to this there arises the sphere of industry with its camouflaged cult of the Promethean spirit. Man deifies his inventive power, with which he hopes both to master Nature and to supersede her. At the end comes the creature of this inventive power, the machine.

No man can say what will follow after this. So far our progress has been a descent. Certainly a baser idol than the machine would be difficult to conceive.

All, or nearly all the tasks which have become master problems in their turn, have survived to our own day, and exist one beside the other. The ideas which crystallized within them are still alive within certain limited areas of modern life. Often we move from one such area to another, for all of them are still necessities to us. That too is a unique state of affairs and also a symptomatic one. It is pregnant both with danger and with opportunity.

II

THE SEARCH FOR A LOST STYLE

MEN were not slow to see or to lament the fact that a quite unprecedented confusion of styles marked the nineteenth century. Indeed, they seem to have deplored the loss of style more passionately than they did the loss of actual art, and the great hope which the 'modernism' of the new architecture inspired was precisely that this would restore the lost unity of style upon a new level.

There is only a very limited connection between this chaos of style and the kind of thing which we can observe in the final phase of ageing cultures, when the peculiar energy by which style is created seems suddenly to wane, nor have attempts to explain the phenomenon along these or any other lines or to read some kind of logic into it hitherto proved strikingly satisfactory. Certainly there is very little foundation for the widely held theory that the nineteenth century, instead of forming a style of its own, simply repeated the styles of the past in their original sequence, much as the different phases of a man's life pass in the hour of death with incredible rapidity before his mind.

Actually the chaos in question seems to have a variety of causes. One of them seems to be that within the brief space of less than two centuries so many tasks, each of a different, and sometimes even of contrary character to the rest, competed together for the rôle of master problem. It is, indeed, at feverish pace that one now takes over the primacy from the other. This happens not, as previously, at intervals of several centuries, but at intervals of a decade or two.

A proliferation of different styles is, as a matter of fact, no new phenomenon. It has occurred before, and where it has done so it has led to breaches of stylistic unity. We see it happening in the sixteenth century, when in certain zones of European art, churches were still built in Gothic style while secular buildings used the more modern style of the Renaissance.

In more recent times, when the multiplication of tasks was rapidly increasing, it was only natural for the process to be intensified. This cause is most certainly one of those at work, though it is not the decisive one.

A second cause is this: the solution of none of these master problems produced a thing of such power that it could assert itself to the point of creating a general style for the age. It is true that the nineteenth century can show the attempts to form such a style, but they are no more than attempts. Each of them affects certain provinces of painting and sculpture, though such influence is the exception rather than the rule; the decisive and important developments in these arts remain things apart, and this applies particularly to those that break new ground under the leadership of artists of note and produce the most truly significant work. We fail to find one of the most vital marks of a genuine style, namely the existence behind all the arts of some common secret formative force which impresses the same fundamental characteristics on all of them alike. Each art has already withdrawn into a realm of its own, each goes its own way and passes through its different stages of development in isolation from the rest. The cause behind all this is that there are no longer any great composite works of art which can harmonize the individual arts into the stylistic unity of a single work.

This condition also has a precedent. We can find a parallel phenomenon in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in those territories which had turned Protestant; for here the church had ceased to be a composite work of art, while the castle had begun to assume a purely conventional form. The unity of the arts had thus been rent asunder; painting, which till then had had a sacred function, was secularized and divorced from its service to the Church. It sought refuge in the house of laymen, where indeed in the form of totally isolated pictures it represented, as in the nineteenth century, the main centre of artistic effort.

This, however, is incidental. The main fact is that no genuine style was created. Architecture, it is true, shows a certain capacity for *assimilating* style and there are occasions when one has the illusory impression of a certain stylistic unity, but an illusory impression it is, for it is merely a thing of the surface. A stylistic mask has simply been laid over the basic structure, where it serves as a disguise, for the basic structure itself has already taken on an entirely different character.

This is why it becomes possible for one and the same building to choose between different styles after its basic form has already been determined. The arbitrarily imposed styles, however, have already been undermined by certain new trends, of which the artist himself may not be fully conscious. Surely it is clear that when this kind of thing can happen, style has come to mean something completely different from what it meant before.

True style is, even in an isolated work of art, an organic thing which everywhere and in all its manifestations expresses a very specific character. When we are dealing with something, however, that is not really genuine style at all, then what we have before us is mere external appearance, a thing deliberately willed and 'begotten from mere *knowledge*, from the knowledge of what the thing seen by the beholder *ought* to look like'—'*aus einem* Wissen *um das Erscheinungsbild* gewollt *und erzeugt*' (Philipp Lersch).

Alongside of these causes of the loss of style, however, there are yet others which are entirely new, as new in their way as the problems themselves.

ALL TASKS CLAIM EQUALITY OF STATUS

From the end of the eighteenth century onward all architectural tasks begin to claim the status of artistic problems and a right to be dignified by artistic forms, though this has hitherto been the privilege of a relatively small class of building. The claim is something entirely new and may be regarded as a symptom of prime importance.

The question of a unitary style, or lack of it, is intimately connected with this phenomenon, for it means that the beginnings of a new style are, when they appear, presented with a wholly insoluble problem. A unitary style, in the full sense of the word, only exists where art places itself in the service of a common task, while wide fields of constructive effort are allowed to remain wholly outside the sphere of art as such. It was this state of affairs that produced that glorious unity of styles shown by all the great cultures in their early stages, when vast composite sacramental works of art drew all the individual arts—and not those of painting and sculpture alone—into their service and acted in regard to them as an ordering and co-ordinating force. In the West this phase gave us the ineluctable certitude of style displayed by the Romanesque, which knew but one fundamental problem, the Cathedral. Whatever lay outside this great composite work and had any pretension to be a work of art itself was a mere reflex from the sacramental sphere. Admittedly there is in the different territories—and beyond these in the different orders—a wealth of different forms of church, but they are all variations of the same pattern, and everywhere the fundamental character of the style is determined by the fact that the work which it informs is a single clearly circumscribed artistic unit. The house and the fortified castle, however, the bridge and the barn, do not belong to the realm of art at all, however perfect may be their form.[1]

Even in the period of the Gothic, however, when we begin at the opposite extreme of the 'cultural spectrum' to get a purely secular art—it takes shape in the private sphere of the castle and the 'burgess' house—the unity of style ceases to be absolute though it is to some extent restored by the Renaissance which once more makes the 'palace-castle' into a composite sacramental work of art. Thenceforward we have two focal points of art, two ideal composite art works, one sacred and one semi-sacred, the church and the 'palace-castle'. In the Baroque these two focal-points approach very close to one another—the forms distinguishing one sphere pass over to the other—until in the happiest instances they merge completely into a twi-polar unity. At the end of the Baroque in the Catholic South, the two composite

[1] Cf. Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, Vol. 2, the section dealing with the house, the castle and the cathedral.

works of art, the palace and the church, coalesce in the case of the *Kaiserstifte* into a single building, a kind of composite super-work.

The high early eighteenth century still succeeded in subordinating all specialized tasks to one or other of the spheres. A stable was formally treated as a castle for horses, a library as a palace of books or temple of wisdom, the hall of a university as a palace of the sciences; the thing which later became a museum as a castle gallery. A hospital, a home for the aged or a *mont-de-piété* were, however, assigned to the sphere of the church, and ecclesiastic forms were employed in their construction. A clear-cut pictorial tradition provides in each case the requisite allegorical apparatus and so establishes the significance of the whole. This binds the work closely to one of the two spiritual centres of church or castle.

In that moment, however, where every architectural task claims equality of artistic status, the sheer diversity and multiplicity of the tasks makes it impossible for any one of them to establish a natural empire and so impose a unitary style upon the rest. Where, despite the difficulties, such an attempt is made, a perceptible degree of violence is unavoidably done to certain kinds of job. In such cases the inherent character of the task fails to express itself properly because it has been subjected to a process of regimentation, to a kind of artistic dictatorship.

Where this state of affairs obtains, the attempt to control the whole range of architectural creation by making it subordinate to two central tasks, *i.e.* to restore and even extend the old régime, is of course equally abortive, for by now technology has begotten a wholly new order of problems which are wholly unmanageable, if their solution is attempted under the old formula. At first these new problems were simply disregarded. Later however, around nineteen hundred, they were destined to clamour imperiously for equality of artistic status and even to arrogate to themselves a kind of leadership over the rest.

As soon, however, as it became clear that none of the styles, or what professed to be styles, of the nineteenth century could become the general style of the age and that consequently there was no expedient by which the demands of the various styles for equality of status could be satisfied, we witness a form of endeavour that till then was new in history to the point of being undreamed of, as new as the claim to equality itself, for the attempt is now made to clothe every task in whatever style happens to be considered appropriate to it. Instead of the regimentation of all tasks according to a single pattern, we now encounter a pluralism of styles that has no precedent in any previous culture whatever. Let us, however, examine the development of the whole process in somewhat greater detail.

THE EGALITARIANISM OF THE FIRST ARCHITECTURE OF THE REVOLUTION

It was Ledoux, mighty pioneer of revolutionary ideas in architecture, who round about the year 1800 set up this theory that all architectural creation had a claim to artistic status.[1] All architectural problems are in this sense to enjoy parity of esteem, and the privileges of a hitherto favoured few are to be abolished: '*Pour la première fois on verra sur la même échelle la magnificence du palais et de la guinguette.*' For the first time people will see the splendour of the palace and of the hut treated on the same level, for there is 'splendour' in every task: '*Le grand appartient essentiellement aux édifices de tout genre.*'[2]

What Ledoux was seeking after was the creation of equality at the highest level; and his aim was to make every piece of architecture follow the pattern of what for him was the highest architectural form of all, namely the monument. It is for the monument, that most exalted of creations, to ennoble tasks that till then had been held in low regard.

This egalitarianism at the higher level finds a parallel in the history of ideas. Thus Saint-Simonism, one of the earlier forms of Utopian Socialism, 'transforms all things into God with the result that he had no God at all, as when all men are kings then no man holds that office. Saint-Simon (1760–1825) turns all the trades and activities of man into a cult'—this is equally true of the architectural utopias of the Revolutionary designers—'the object being to dispense with what is true and real; a religious point of view is introduced that is actually on a par with irreligion'.[1]

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[1] Emil Kaufmann, 'Die Stadt des Architekten Ledoux', in *Kunstwissenschaftliche Forschungen II* (1933).

[2] Claude-Nicholas Ledoux, *L'architecture* . . . etc. (1804).

Actually the style that was now impressed upon every piece of architecture shows for the first time the unmistakable characteristics of the artifact; art now speaks what is obviously a manufactured language, patched together out of various bits of the dead language of the past, the choice of these fragments being largely determined by a preference for the monumental and for simple geometric forms, the 'grammar' and 'syntax' that connects these fragments being reduced to a few very primitive rationalist connecting links[2]—all this despite the fact that any actual connection with the past is rejected. Indeed, Ledoux speaks of the '*impuissante leçon du passé*'.

The imposition of this so-called style can often not be carried out without violence to good sense and sometimes results in downright absurdity. The tollhouses on the boundary of Paris might have been taken for temples or possibly for mausoleums—unless, that is to say, one mistook them for prisons; a charcoal-burner's kiln becomes a thing resembling the grave of one of the Pharaohs. The house for a bailiff takes on the shape of that most perfect of physical bodies, the sphere. The fantastic character of all this general upward levelling is too palpable to be missed.

It has not been generally recognized that in addition to this upward levelling there had already been a downward levelling—in the Austria of Joseph I, for in the architecture of that place and time there is a kind of prelude to the second revolution. While the phenomenon lasted (that is between 1780 and 1790) one could scarcely distinguish between a church, a theatre and a granary. All have the identical appearance of boxes. Buildings are simply objects of utility serving the needs of man, they are the products of craftsmen pure and simple and are no concern of the higher forms of art. Architecture waives all transcendental pretension.

STYLISTIC COMPROMISE: NEO-HELLENISM AND NEO-GOTHIC

If we take a broad view of the period following the revolution we will find that it is marked by two separate attempts at the creation of a style. These have not been thought out like Ledoux's programme by any abstract process of logic, but are the direct result of historical conditions.

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[1] J. A. Möhler, *Gesammelte Schriften und Aufsätze* (Rigensburg, 1839/40).

[2] Cf. Emil Kaufmann, *op. cit.*

Neo-Hellenism, the 'Greek revival' in theory, takes the Greek as the basis of its style, but that basis is too narrow. The shape of a Greek temple is fundamentally unsuited for the requirements of the new age. There is thus no true renaissance of the Greek at all. The thing to which the new Hellenism acts as an overlay is really something produced by the still active formal principle of the enlightened eighteenth century; indeed, this last continues to bring forth solutions, the modern and eminently sensible character of which can on occasion be a real source of pleasure. The Greek remains a mere façade, a thing designed to apply to architecture a process of æsthetic hallowing. The apparently homogeneous character of the style exists only on the surface, the product of a kind of æsthetic ideology.

There is now a super-abundance of Greek colonnades, they are to be found in palaces, in museums, in stock exchanges, in parliaments and coffee-houses, they are found in the covered walks of watering-places, in casinos and in private houses. Yet only in the museum, which now assumes the rôle of a sacred building, could such 'quotations' from the Greek really be justified.

But even in the limited form, which it had necessarily to assume, Neo-Hellenism only held sway over a kind of middle kingdom of architecture. Both on its right and left flank important architectural domains remained unconquered by it—above all the Christian Church remained relatively uninfluenced. There was, of course, an attempt to give a Greek form to church exteriors. London saw the Erechtheion reappear as a church, and the Temple of the Winds took shape there once more—as a church tower, but the interiors were compelled to seek other forms than Greek; the Madeleine in Paris is an example. All this hermaphrodism, however, was so completely pointless that the Gothic soon revived.

Indeed, this groping back to the Gothic had from the first a wholly different origin from the groping back to the Greek. The Gothic tradition in certain parts of Europe, and particularly in

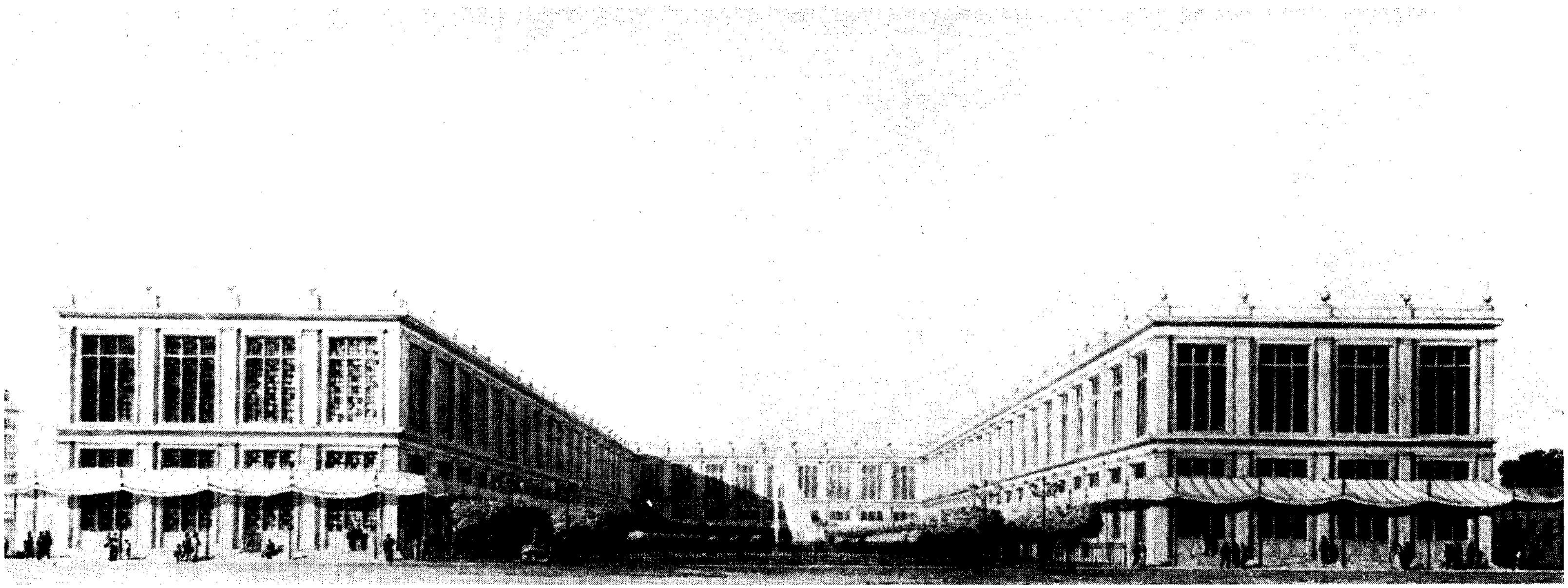
England, reaches forward both in church and palace building to the very threshold of the new age. The revival of the Gothic church therefore takes on the character of the restoration of a thing that has never really died. It has a direct and living link with the past, a reality symbolized by the completion of the unfinished cathedral at Cologne. Thus it is, too, that the Gothic revival can reproduce historically accurate copies of building of the past and do so to excellent purpose, whereas such copies, where Neo-Hellenism is concerned, have but negligible importance. Even so the two movements are complementary to one another, though theoretically in conflict. They produce something like a stylistic two-party system, under which town halls are reserved for the Neo-Gothic, while castles and palaces are claimed by both contestants. Conditions are thus produced on the Continent very like those obtaining in England in the eighteenth century.

On the left wing, however, both parties seek control in the solution of those modern problems which the architecture of the revolution had tended to overlook, but which are now foisted increasingly into the foreground—and both parties come to grief in the attempt. A bemused world witnesses the depressing spectacle of conservatories built of glass and iron conceived in Doric or Gothic idiom, it sees steam-engines with cylinders fashioned like the stumps of Grecian pillars, it sees a railway station with a Doric front and little Pompeian pillars and narrow Gothic columns of cast iron used in a similar connection, it sees fortress towers in Gothic style guarding a modern iron bridge. Such monstrosities reveal all too plainly the inherent absurdity, in this particular context, of the stylistic pretensions behind them and it was not likely to be long before the reaction against them set in.

Even so it was possible for both trends, the Neo-Hellenic and the Gothic, to be united in the work of a single artist.

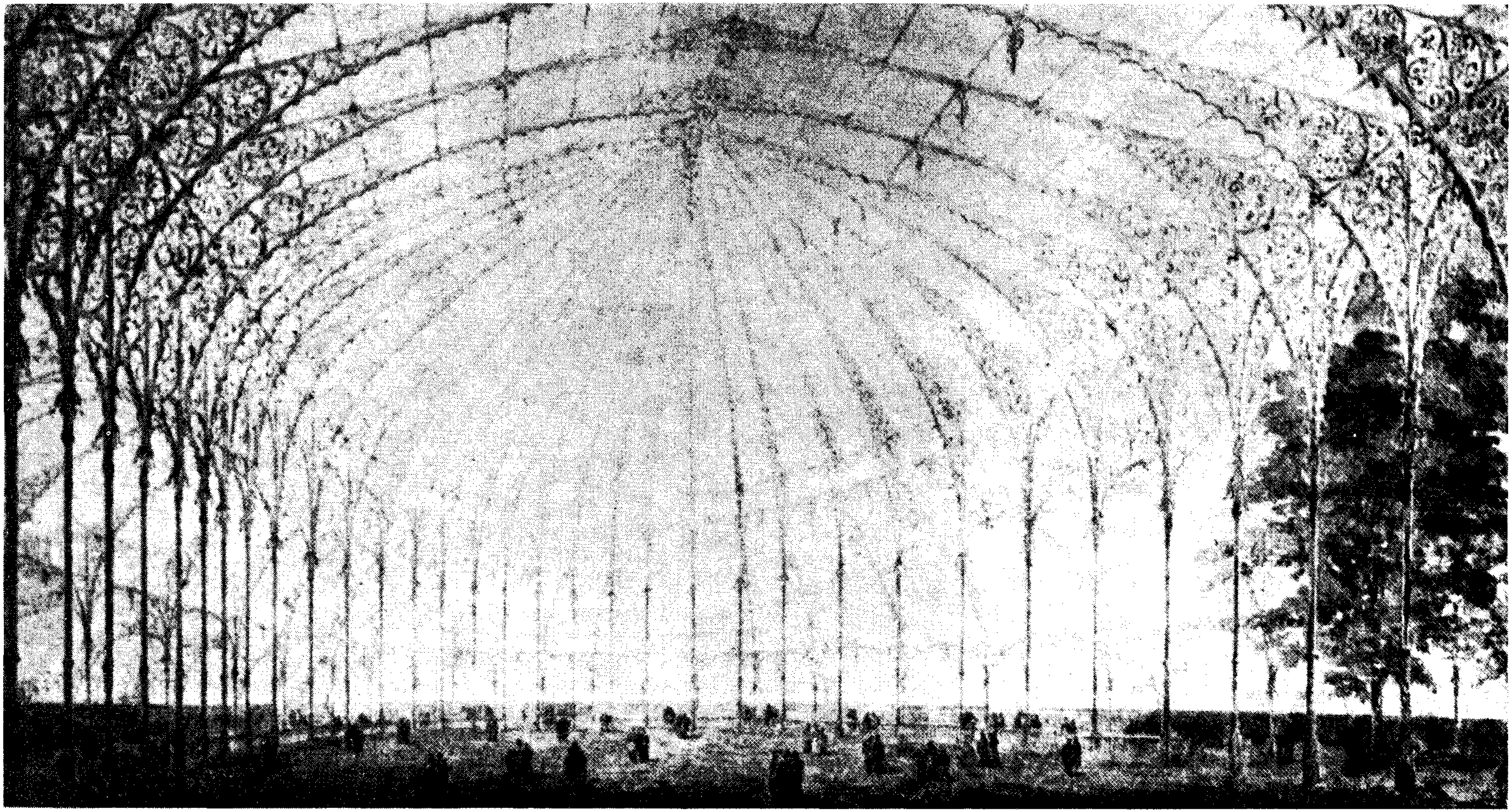
PLURALISM OF STYLES

It now dawned on people, however, that the character of the various tasks confronting architecture was much too varied to



SCHINKEL: DESIGN FOR A DEPARTMENT STORE, 1827

A production that with very little modification could have been put up a century later. 'For a short time in the 1830's domestic architecture and the architecture of utility become the problems in the solution of which the highest degree both of novelty and quality is achieved.' (*See page* 32.)



HOREAU: DESIGN FOR AN EXHIBITION HALL IN CAST IRON, 1837

'The general conception of these secular cathedrals of glass and iron was hardly ever to be surpassed. The fantastic and supposedly exaggerated features in these projects, their vast dimensions, could only be translated into reality half a century later.' *(See page 48.)*

bring them under a common denominator, and so the whole idea of a unitary style was abandoned, and the attempt was made—at least up to the point of recognizing the principle—to apply an individual style to every building job undertaken. Thus we get that wholly new thing, the thing that had never appeared before, a conscious and deliberate pluralism of architectural style.

The first representative of this school in England was John Nash (1752–1835),[1] who chose the Neo-Hellenistic style for his town house, and the Neo-Gothic for his country house. He built an Italianate villa at Cronkhill in Shropshire (1802) while applying to Blaise Castle near Bristol a rural old English cottage style with carved gables and a tiled roof. Brighton Pavilion is designed in the Hindu style, or in something that was taken for that at the time, but choice of style is still a very arbitrary thing.

On the Continent the movement's first leader was Leo von Klenze (1784–1864). He was more logical than Nash, he proceeded on the assumption that there was for every piece of architecture a style which was demanded by the nature and purpose of the job. Actually Klenze was reviving an idea which, though its influence at the time was slight, had in fact been put forward by the architects of the Revolution. According to this idea, which was that of the *architecture parlante*, every building should express its purpose in its style. So it came about that Klenze built a palace in Renaissance style, a museum in Greek style, and based a church largely on the Capella Palatina in Palermo. The idiom of antiquity was applied to a Hall of Fame, and that of the Roman Baroque to an official residence. The tendency was to last some time, so that a university, being a seat of humanism, gets built in Renaissance style, a parliament building is made Neo-Hellenic, and Moorish features are given to a coffee-house or a synagogue.

Of course, even this pluralism of an *architecture parlante*, which for the most part uses a historical vocabulary, is exceedingly superficial. Yet pluralism need not necessarily be ignorant of any other tongue save that of history. There are signs, particularly today, that it might revive in a more profound and more logical form, and the more violent and clamorous the insistence on the aforesaid 'job-equality' in architecture, the better its chances are likely to be.

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[1] Cf. J. Summerson's monograph on Nash (London, 1935).

By 1830 it had begun more and more to be realized that antique architecture, even if the treatment was extremely free, was quite unsuited to modern needs, and this developed into something like a rejection of all the examples from the past. In 1828 Heinrich Hübsch published his essay, '*In welchem Stil sollen wir bauen?*' (In what style are we to build?) which expressed views that are very modern indeed. 'The new style will now find solutions to the most varied problems and will invariably do so with the highest degree of adaptability and by the most direct method (*auf dem nächsten Weg*). It will move and have its being within the context of our own age and will measure up unhesitatingly to every demand with which it is confronted. Nor will the architect present that forlorn and helpless figure, as which he appeared, when only the limited means of Greek architecture were at his disposal. Buildings will no longer have a conventional historical character so that the beholder must undergo a course of archæological study before he can appreciate them, they will rather assume a character that is perfectly natural so that the layman will feel the same about them as the instructed artist.'

These ideas, which were convincingly realized in the utility architecture of the thirties, may really be taken as formulating the programme of a 'Bourgeois Revolution'. At the beginning of the twentieth century, in the more temperate phases of the 'second revolution', people often harked back to the works of this period, which indeed they felt to be masterly. Yet this silent revolution of the thirties was hardly able to make any real impact at all, since before it could do so, it had already been overrun by the next wave of stylistic fashion.

THE NEO-RENAISSANCE AS A TOTAL RESTORATION

Round 1840 the attempt was made in England by Barry, and by Semper on the Continent, to found a comprehensive style on the architecture of the Renaissance. It was Semper who brilliantly formulated that restoration's ideology.

He attributes to the art of the Renaissance 'a glorious superiority to all that has gone before, including the highest artistic achievements of the Greeks'—here his dig at the Neo-Hellenes is very obvious. Actually he rates the art of the Romans higher than that of the Greeks. For him the Roman style and Roman realism opens an entirely new chapter in the story of architecture (*Stil* II, 380). It was through the study of Roman antiquity that the art of the Renaissance attained that superb freedom in dealing with the examples furnished by the ancient which gave it its glorious wealth of ideas, and enabled it to put even the art of the ancients into the shade (*Stil* II, 466). Roman art, Semper held, attained its fullest freedom in that new awakening of ancient art which was the Renaissance (*Stil* II, 477).

Semper held however *that this Renaissance had barely attained half its potential development* for the spirit of the age had frowned upon Renaissance architecture and it had been overtaken by its macrocosmic sister art of music, and had indeed been left behind by that art to a degree which it was sad to contemplate (*Stil* II, 477). Nevertheless, here was the art with which modern architecture must seek to re-establish contact, here its future was to be sought (*Stil* II, 477).

About the time when Semper was developing these ideas, Jacob Burckhardt (born 1818) was also causing the main emphasis to be placed on the high Italian Renaissance in cultural history and in the history of art. Later much attention was also paid to the Baroque. Semper's book on Style (*Stil*) and Burckhardt's *Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* ('Culture of the Renaissance in Italy') both appeared in the same year of 1860. Of all the attempts to establish contact with the past, the attempt to continue the development of the Renaissance of the Roman was by far the most inspired and promising, for it was best suited to satisfy the demands of the 'modern' in that age and in this respect embraced the widest area, for on the 'right' wing it offered the possibility of building churches which were related in style to all the other architectural creations—though it must be admitted that the Neo-Renaissance church never actually supplanted the Gothic. To the 'left' wing it offered the art of Rome, an art which had its origin and being amid conditions very similar to those among which metropolitan man was then beginning to live. It offered an idiom capable of being taken over for baths, for great halls and utility building of all kinds. Thus the attempt is made to apply the general design of the huge *aula* of a Roman bath within which great masses of men had once been able to move about without difficulty, to the construction of a railway station. If in those days sport had attained its present dimensions, we should have had stadiums which not only resembled Roman amphitheatres in shape, as in due course they were destined to do, but stadiums which also resembled them in style.

THE RISE OF TECHNICAL ARCHITECTURE

Since the middle of the century two groups of opposites have confronted one another. Over against the technological chastities of the modern builder stands the Neo-Renaissance, while confronting the artist architect there is the constructional engineer; there is a similar rivalry between the *école des beaux arts* and the *école polytechnique.* A parallel division is to be found in painting between the official academic groups on the one side and the oppositional ones, the Realists, later the Impressionists—the 'scientific' painters—on the other. In the political conflicts of the age the men of the polytechnics and the 'independent' painters are ranged in the ranks of the revolutionaries.

The conflict in architecture was particularly acute and filled an entire century. 'What is the engineer's relation to the architect? Are they one and the same thing? What is the function of the art of each?' These questions now are cardinal.

There were isolated attempts at resolving the conflict, among which the formula of the Frenchman, Labrouste, a contemporary of Semper, is of particular interest. His plan was to leave the whole supporting framework to the constructor in iron, while the architect was to be concerned with the form of the masonry which clothed it. One man thus was to be made responsible for the bones while another put on the flesh. This was the method actually adopted by him when he put up the library of St. Geneviève in Paris. Fundamentally the thing was a degradation of the architect, and Labrouste's attempt to unite the functions of architect and engineer in his own person did not do away with the fatal dualism inherent in this arrangement.

There was now a rapid growth of engineering construction, which began to draw more and more building jobs into its own sphere; in other words, to take over work to which hitherto the architect had had prescriptive right. The engineer began to take hold of the house, starting with the warehouse and store but in the end going on to the dwelling-house itself. In the forties and fifties American department stores began to adopt glass walls for their fronts, the glass being held in place by iron supports, and in 1885, at the end of the epoch, there appears in Chicago the first tall building with a skeleton consisting wholly of steel. This was William Le Baron Jenney's Home Insurance Company building.

Semper had made the following estimate of the situation which was now developing: 'The artistic power of the French, which is already crippled, and the activity in which it seeks to express itself is concentrating more and more on fields which are as far removed as possible from monumental art. This would seem to imply a very unhealthy condition and even the impending decay of the art of architecture—if indeed that decay has not already set in.'[1]

In one respect this state of affairs differs fundamentally from that by which the next generation was to be confronted, for the engineers do not look upon their activity as an art in the higher sense of that word. Rather is it the architects themselves who recognize the importance of the new constructional method, and who are conscious that they are in a period of transition. 'May the machines, the inventors and speculators do all they can to prepare the ground, so that science, that healing Spear of Achilles, may create the new forms. The first necessity is for architecture to step down from her throne and go into the market place both to teach and to learn.'

EGALITARIANISM OF THE SECOND REVOLUTION: THE NEW BUILDING

When shortly before 1900 the new materials, concrete and ferro-concrete, were combined with those 'naked' forms which had first appeared at the time of the French Revolution, there appeared the totalitarianism of the 'new building', which found its most logical expression in factories, garages and office buildings. This 'new building' literally takes the field by storm and sets its mark on the whole range of architectural tasks, for there is about it something compelling and irresistible, and it almost seemed as though the new style that was so eagerly awaited was about to spring forth from it. 'The modern movement is a genuine and independent style', says one commentator.[1] That was the voice of the devotees. There were, however, those who saw deeper. 'In the practical and objective nature of engineering, even if it attains perfection in its own field, there is nothing that can be called a style as the word has been interpreted in the past', a style, that is to say, that informs all departments 'and permits us to perceive something transcendental in every decorative gesture'. 'The satisfaction to be experienced in the clear, self-evidently logical lines, spaces and shapes of the engineers' creation is seldom a thing that is sufficient in itself, and a lurking dissatisfaction sometimes brings about an actual violation of functional purity.'[2]

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[1] Semper, *Kleine Schriften*, p. 398.

Like the first revolution, the second clings to the dogma of equality of status for all building jobs, but now the levelling process takes place, not at the highest but at the lowest level; on that of practical utility, a level that lies beneath the sphere of man, in the houses of the machine. Even when it comes to applying the new idiom to the dwelling-house there are difficulties. It is quite true that the new houses are superior to those erected in the middle of the century, but they do not attain the 'habitability' of those of the eighteen-thirties. The task where the new building displays complete creative bankruptcy is that of the church, and that task it simply fails to recognize. 'Since the age cannot yet visualize its style and is still uncertain of what it is seeking to achieve, it remains fettered to purposes that it can understand. Churches in the modern engineering style somehow seem wrong, because they serve no purpose which is self-evident to the practical engineer (*weil sie keinen technisch adäquaten Daseinszweck haben*).'[1]

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[1] N. Pevsner, *An Outline of European Architecture* (London, 1934).

[2] K. Jaspers, *Die geistige Situation unserer Zeit* (Berlin–Leipzig, 1933).

Adolf Loos still leaves two tasks to the architect proper, the memorial and the monument, but in the next generation even these no longer exist. All that was once reserved for the architect has either disintegrated or has been drawn within the orbit of the constructional engineer.

The revolt of the engineer against the architect, of utility building against the transcendental claims of art, has seemingly ended with a total victory for the new powers. But the unity thus achieved has been purchased by allowing a single department, that of the factory, to act as dictator over the rest, and by permitting downright and intolerable violence to be done to the natural demands of individual jobs, for while the material requirements of these may usually be met, the same cannot be said of what may be called the spiritual and emotional content. This is something that is now admitted by sometime extremists of the new building.

REACTION: NEO-CLASSICISM AS A MASK

The movement here discussed for a time carried all before it, but the period during which it really exercised leadership in its original purity was barely more than a decade. During the thirties reaction sets in at a number of places, each of these revolts being quite independent of the rest. The 'New' building is rejected and in its place throughout the whole world there is a propagation of a Neo-Classicist movement of an utterly superficial kind. The most radical of these is to be found in Russia, Italy and Germany. They are simply stylistic humanist masks superimposed on the bodies of building, these last being inspired by a brutally logical materialism, which takes little heed of the individual character of any particular job. Their 'humanism' is an 'alibi'.

Here then, as Jaspers recognized, is the typical alternation of our time. 'It does not seek after the incalculable form of a true work of art and by that means force genuine artistic content on the alleged purity of the engineer's handiwork. Instead it merely arbitrarily seeks its opposite', either imposing the dictatorially prescribed form or taking refuge in sheer violence and anarchy, so long as these provide a change. 'The cleanness of this world of the engineer, the world that lacks transcendence, for it is no more than a perfect machine, invariably crumbles away into something that is alien to itself'—the reason being the half-conscious urge for 'something more', the urge that cannot be satisfied by the purely functional alone.

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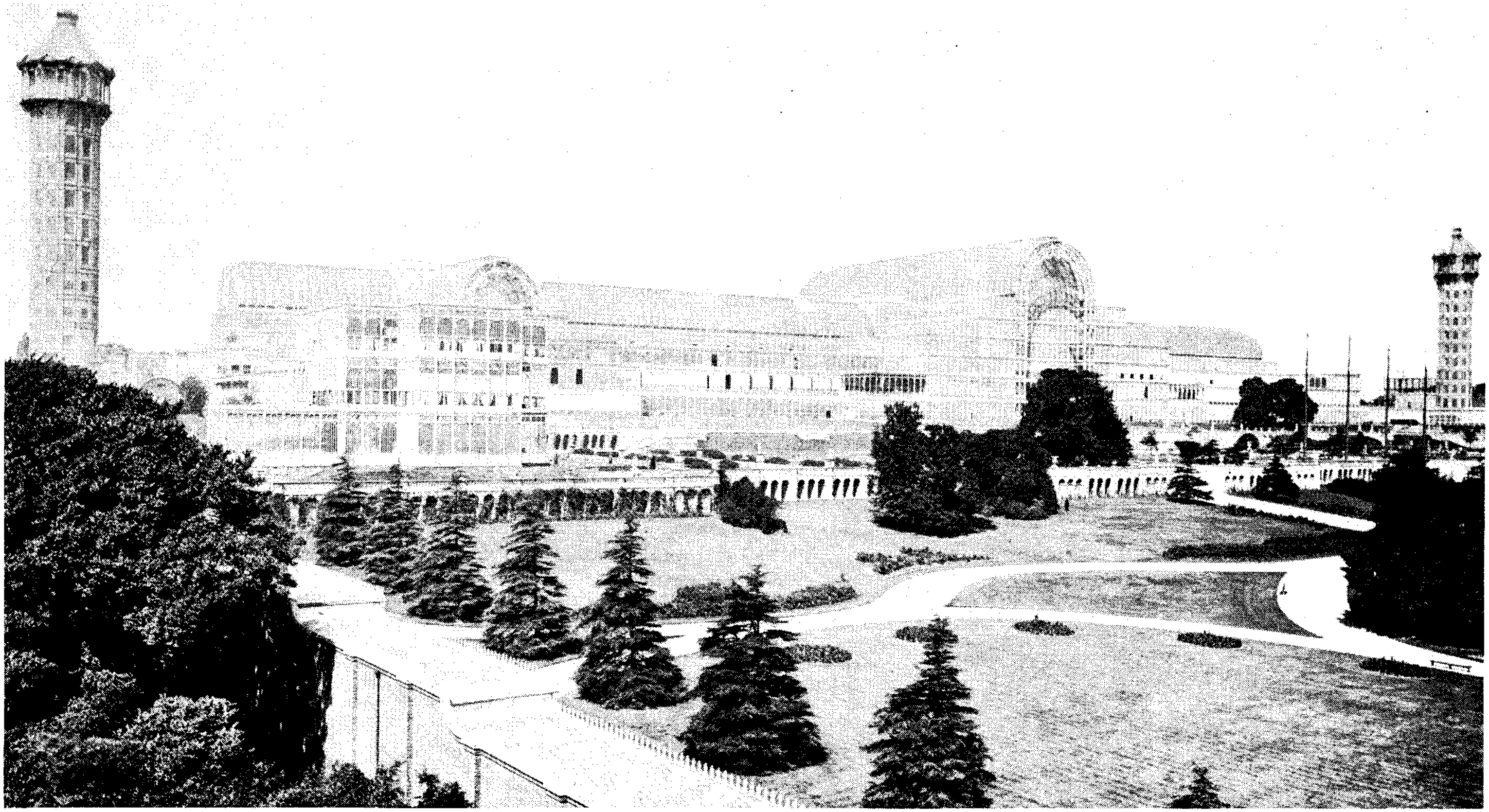
[1] K. Jaspers, *op. cit.*

THE BEGINNINGS OF A NEW PLURALISM

The more intense the egalitarian craze becomes, the stronger grows the contrary desire for a rational differentiation between the various architectural tasks, a differentiation that not only takes into account the external purpose of a given building, but the essential nature of the thing, the stronger grows the unwillingness to accept some 'stylistic scheme' imposed from above, the greater the readiness to recognize the fact that solutions have already been found for certain problems which are entirely adequate to the demands of the present day and which embody living values that should not be surrendered just for the sake of some abstract doctrine.

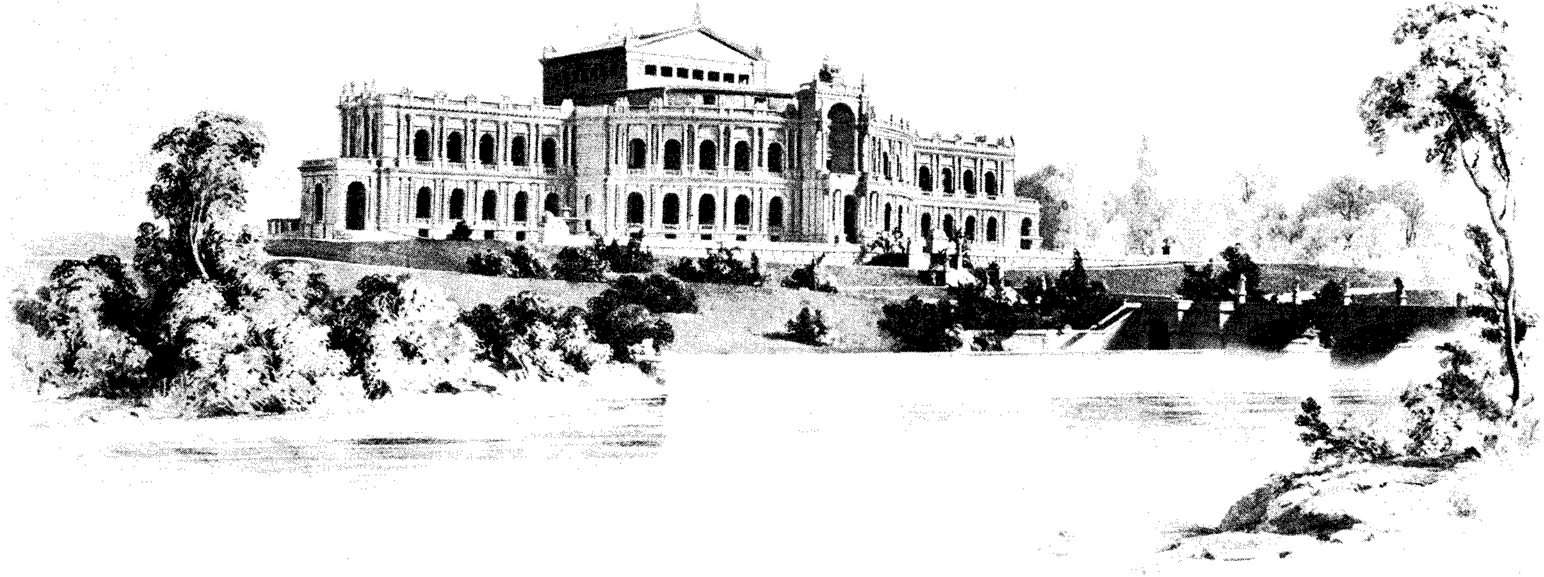
There thus arises a new pluralism in building which takes little account of history, but a very great account of reality, that is not superficial but is concerned with the essential nature of things. Something of this kind was clearly in the mind of the brilliant Bötticher when he wrote in 1846 'that a real study of the history of art could usefully annihilate some of the ideas which he had concerning the styles of the past. We could then learn how much in them merely had relevance within the context of a particular time and could safely be rejected by the present day, and how much of their content contained values that were eternal. This would be the true eclecticism of the spirit, an eclecticism that concentrated on the essences of things'—an eclecticism of power, not of weakness. In the main, the same basic need was seeking expression in America as much as in Europe.



Courtesy of the Mansell Collection

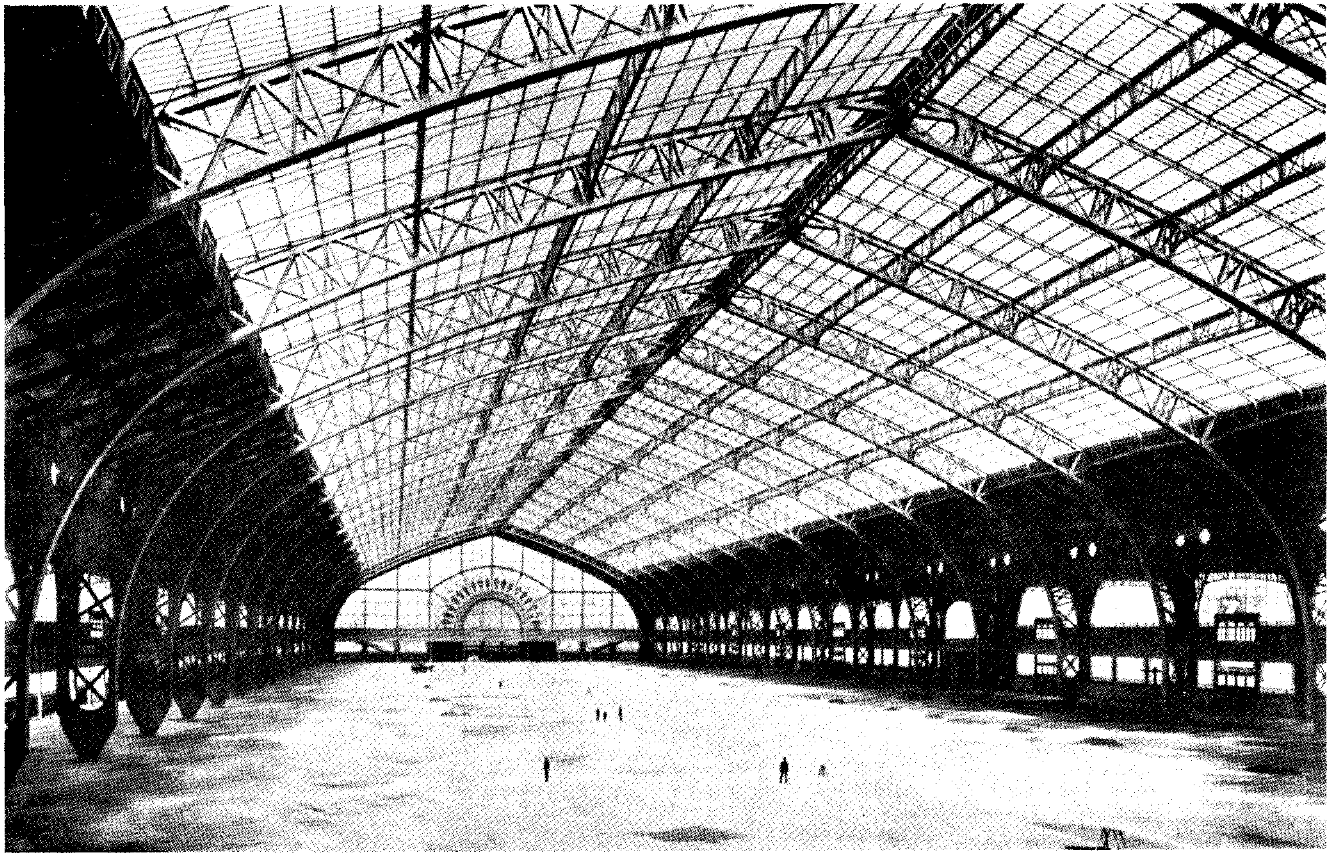
PAXTON: CRYSTAL PALACE, BUILT FOR THE GREAT EXHIBITION IN LONDON, 1851

'A landmark in the development of glass and iron construction, and the very name Crystal Palace betrays the new sentiment.' (*See page* 49.)



SEMPER: DESIGN FOR THE RICHARD WAGNER FESTIVAL THEATRE IN MUNICH, 1864

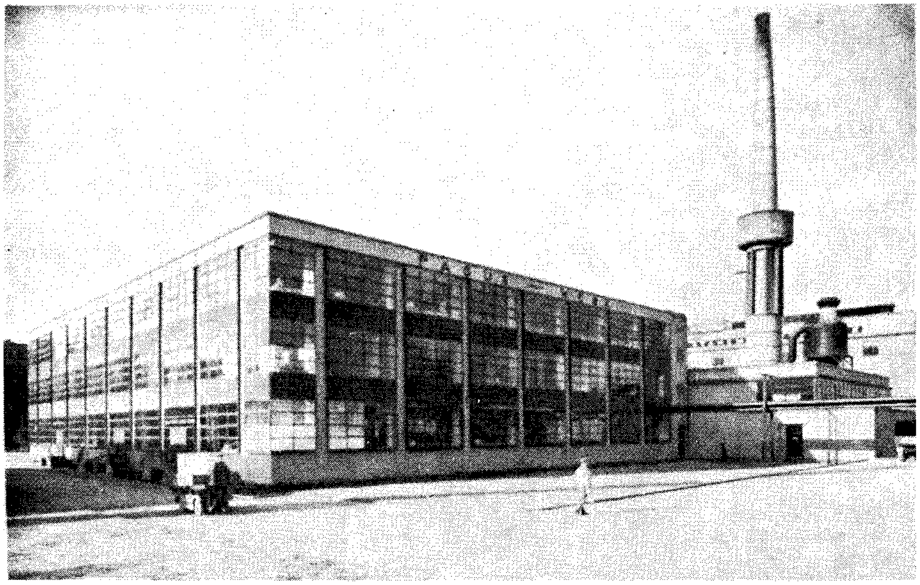
'The theatres of the latter half of the nineteenth century were the Dionysiac counterpart of the art temple which is the museum—the latter of course coming under the empire of Apollo.' The same type as Semper's projects for the Dresden opera house and similar to the Vienna State Theatre, but in a more spacious setting. (*See page* 38.)



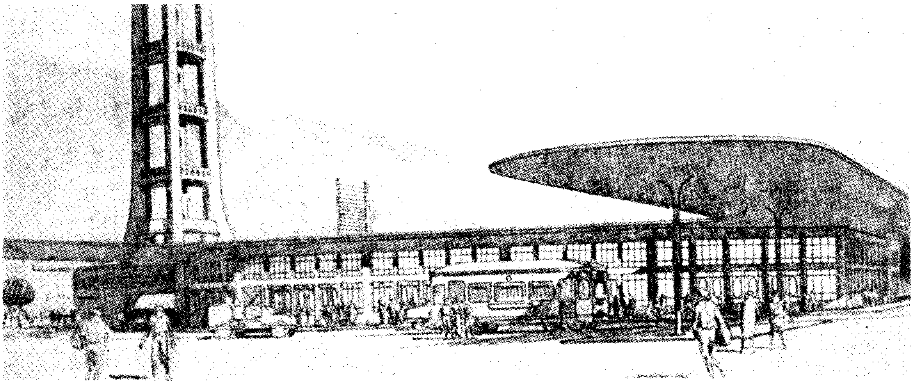
Courtesy Anton Schroll & Co., Vienna

COTTANCIN: 'PALAIS DES MACHINES' FOR THE 1889 INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION IN PARIS

Combined the height of the nave of a Gothic cathedral with a width ten times as broad; it crystallized the deepest tendencies of the age. (*See page* 49.)



GROPIUS: THE FAGUS WORKS IN ALFELD ON LEINE, 1912
'Now for the first time leading artists begin to design garages, factories, railway stations. Buildings now come into being which even today are felt to be classical within the limits of their kind and purpose.' (*See page* 54.)



TONY GARNIER: DESIGN FOR CENTRAL STATION, 1901–4
'By the withdrawing inwards of the vertical supports of the building's frame there is born the new element of the platform, a primal cell of the "New Building".' (*See page* 107.)

PARTY WARFARE OF STYLE IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES

We see then that the processes at work in architecture, though outwardly very confusing, are at bottom not so meaningless as is generally supposed. In examining this whole problem we have been chiefly concerned with the search for stylistic unity, and in this general connection we have been able to discern, since the year 1800, three different approaches to the whole problem of style which have been more or less continuously at cross-purposes with each other. The various battlefronts cross and merge, but for all that we must distinguish clearly between the ideas behind them.

The different trends then are these:

First what may be called the totalitarian tendencies, each marked by uniformity of style.

To these belong the architecture of the first revolution with its identification of geometry with architecture, and its use of the monument as a guiding principle. To this group also belongs the total restoration of the Roman in the Neo-Renaissance. This last has a rival in the glass and iron architecture of the engineer, a thing that also develops a drive towards uniformity.

To these we must add the attempts to form a rational style based on the realities of construction. The factory becomes the model, and then the machine. Architecture and its transcendental function are abolished.

Finally we have the total (imposed) Neo-Classicism—that was often a characteristic of the twentieth-century dictatorship.

The *second* trend is the stylistic two-party system.

Neo-Hellenism and Neo-Gothic appear as two movements which are at one and the same time in rivalry with each other and complementary to each other. Both movements barely survive the first half of the century.

Thirdly, we have stylistic pluralism. It appears in several forms, all historically minded.

To all the above we must add a *fourth* trend, of which little account has as yet been taken; it is one that deliberately patches together elements from the most varied styles. It appears in a particularly crass form in the train of the French Revolution. A good example is to be found in the work of Ledoux's pupil Lequeu, some of whose designs might really be classed as surrealist.[1] There are also rudiments of this in the art of previous periods, for instance in the much discussed funereal monuments of Borromini in the Church of St. John Lateran at Rome, though here the element of hardness in the patchwork is absent.[2]

The mixture of stylistic elements then appears in a more moderate form in the school inspired by William Morris (1834–1896), R. Norman Shaw (1831–1912) and Philip Webb (1831–1915). The well-known 'Red House' which the last-mentioned designed for William Morris and with Morris's help (1859) shows a mixture of Gothic and eighteenth-century idiom.[3]

This instance of a school of deliberately mixed styles has nothing in common with the 'style-manufacturing' or its arbitrariness and lack of principle that disgraces much later work. The cause at work in the latter case is simple—the downright lack of culture of those who commission the work and of the so-called artists who serve them.

It is obvious that the pullulation of buildings which this deplorable state of affairs has brought into being has distorted the whole picture to the point where we can no longer make sense of it at all. Yet whoever can penetrate beneath the crust of sheer ugliness, may be able to discern a high degree of dramatic logic and consistency in what he uses; he will certainly discover something which is wholly unique in its structure and a symptom of a process lacking all precedent in the past.

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[1] J. J. Lequeu, *Architecture Civile* (Paris, 1792). Illustrations also in Emil Kaufmann, *Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier* (Vienna, 1932).

[2] Cf. Max Dvořák, 'Francesco Borromini als Restaurator' in *Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Munich, 1929).

[3] On William Morris, see J. W. Mackail's monograph (2nd edition, London, 1922).

III

THE ISOLATION OF THE ARTS

This is egoism indeed, when every separate art takes upon itself the rôle of art in the absolute, whereas in reality it only sacrifices its true individuality by doing so.—RICHARD WAGNER.

FROM the end of the eighteenth century the various arts begin to break away from one another. Each seeks to become autonomous, autarchic, each strives to be—in the double sense of the term—'absolute'. Each seeks to present itself to the world in perfect purity—indeed, it elevates that purity to the state of an ethical postulate.

This trend towards autonomy provides us with a good criterion, though there are others, for deciding what tendencies in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century art were really 'modern' and which of them should be classed as conservative and reactionary. Indeed, if we take this same trend towards isolation as our starting-point and proceed to extrude bit by bit from each art what is alien to it, we shall find that we have a datum and a guiding thread. Let us then proceed to eliminate bit by bit from each art what allegedly constitutes a foreign element within it; let us, for instance, eliminate from painting the element of the three-dimensional, the element of line, of architecture and of the theatre, the transcendental and literary element, the element, in a word, of objective content. We will find that if we do this, we have a means of co-ordinating certain historic developments in the art of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and even in certain circumstances taking part in them, the one process reinforcing the other. *Scimus quae facimus.* These developments we have hitherto been compelled to treat as matters of crude historical fact and nothing more. Now we can get down to the very roots of the epoch and have an altogether new means of understanding it.

This is not the place to give a systematized chronological account of this process of self-purgation, though such an account would necessarily be a fundamental constituent of any really strict and penetrating analysis of nineteenth- and twentieth-century art. Here we must content ourselves with the broadest and sketchiest of outlines. Nietzsche recognized long ago that it is impossible to isolate the individual arts without bringing about their degeneration. Indeed, to separate one art from the rest was for him a kind of barbarism, and he saw clearly that there was a connection between the unity of the arts, a sense of style as such. When one is lost the other perishes. Let us then start with a rapid review of the process here discussed.

THE 'PURE' GARDEN

The new art of the garden, in order to achieve its own 'pure' form, extrudes all elements pertaining to architecture and sculpture, in a word, all anthropomorphic elements; it extrudes them both from its plantings and from its treatment of landscape, the main material of its compositions. The garden of course continued spatially to contain architecture but as something, as it were, alien to or divorced from itself, much as a picture may hang on the wall of a modern house, as a thing apart from and alien to the house itself. In its earlier stages the gardener's art continued to preserve a certain relation with that of the painter, in so far as it still created views fashioned after the painter's formula, a kind of stage scene, built up out of nature's elements on nature's unframed stage. When the art reaches its zenith, however, it becomes fully conscious of its individuality and of the uniqueness of its own laws. Then the pictorial element is eliminated and the art attains, or at any rate strives for, an autonomy which recognizes only its peculiar laws of composition.

AUTONOMOUS ARCHITECTURE

Architecture, too, shows a tendency to extrude all anthropomorphic elements, all elements pertaining to sculpture and painting, which in the Baroque were intimately fused with each other. It ultimately also extrudes the element of colour and the different categories of pillars which were the very basis of Renaissance architecture, and so this art also proudly proclaims its autonomy.

This battle for 'pure' architecture began long before the first years of the twentieth century, when Adolf Loos declared war on the ornament, and architects began to think in terms of concrete. It dates back to the architectural revolution at the end of the eighteenth century, which had been set going by Ledoux long before the political revolution took place.

The first things to be extruded are the scenic and pictorial elements. In it the 'profile' disappears from architecture, a thing that the Baroque had conceived on the analogy of organic forms and had actually sometimes related to the human profile. Doors and windows are now cut straight into the wall without any kind of surrounding frame. Buildings lose the cornices with which hitherto they have been crowned. They end in an edge that is quite bare and show preference for a horizontal roof.

Wherever pillars are retained, they cease to have anything organic about them or any suggestion of or connection with the human form, while to substitute the sculptured human form for a pillar becomes utterly unthinkable. Among the different types of pillar there is a preference for those which, like the Doric and the Tuscan, are relatively inorganic, those, that is to say, which have no plinth and have capitals of purely geometric shape. The curvature of the body of the pillar is often all that remains of its original plastic form, and in due course this too disappears. In the place of the pillar we now frequently get the simple support or stanchion. Pillars are now let into the wall as in early Christian art, or they are merely stuck onto the smooth cube of the building. They become, as E. Kaufmann so tellingly points out, a form of *appliqué*. Occasionally sculptured figures and ornament are also treated as *appliqué*.

Colour disappears, or where there is still an echo of it it is toned down to a set of gradations between white and grey, or brown and black, as in Gilly's design for a monument to Frederick II.

The 'pure' or 'absolute' architecture for which for thousands of years the world had apparently been waiting, has now arrived.

PURE SCULPTURE

Sculpture extrudes from itself all that pertains to the pictorial element and timidly withdraws into its own boundaries. It addresses itself through the eye exclusively to the sense of touch. It becomes fundamentally monochrome, whereas in the Baroque and the Rococo monochrome sculpture was a marginal phenomenon. Coloured sculpture was the rule. There arises a form of sculpture white and chaste, a sculpture of pure lines and disciplined forms, a sculpture that sets its face against the pictorial and luxuriant, but it is a sculpture from which all creative abandon has disappeared, a sculpture that knows too much, that is governed by the prescriptions of archæology and keeps on saying with wearisome and repetitive clarity how exquisitely pure a thing it has become. Yet the real plastic and creative power behind it has in fact disappeared. Regarded as an art that calls dead matter into life, that of a Canova or a Thorwaldsen stands far below that of the despised Bernini. It lives by its very hostility to the pictorial, it lives by negation, it lives by its very distaste for colour, for fullness, gaiety and movement.

'The very fact, however, that the power of sculpture is beginning to wane,' says Theodor Hetzer, 'that it is thus timidly withdrawn into its own frontiers, caused it to lose that influence on the other arts which was so important. The isolated and essentially individualistic character of the statue came into hopeless conflict with architecture, with painting and with life. It was thus inevitable that the plaster-of-Paris busts should gradually gather dust and be treated increasingly as useless lumber, and no one should any longer feel concerned about the numerous monuments and memorials except on the day they were unveiled.'[1]

This sculpture is a 'disguised art of relief'. One might put the matter somewhat paradoxically by saying that these sculptures were line drawings carried out in three dimensions.

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[1] Theodor Hetzer, 'Vom Plastischen in der Malerei', *Festschrift für Wilhelm Pinder* (1938), pp. 28–64.

THE ART OF THE LINE DRAWING

There is a correspondence between this ghostly white sculpture, one might almost say pseudo-sculpture, and a certain type of painting that tends towards the monochrome, a type of painting that renounces colour or, at any rate, the sensual element of colour. We find this exemplified in the art of Carstens (1754–1797), which still retains the three-dimensional element in its drawing, but rejects all that pertains to colour, or at any rate reduces it to a gradation moving from black over grey to white.[1] 'Lighting' is also a thing of which little regard is taken. Besides this colourless or 'colour-weak' painting there now appears a tendency completely to eliminate the three-dimensional element in two-dimensional representation.

THE ART OF PURE DRAWING AND THE SILHOUETTE

In painting itself there is now a split between what pertains to the draughtsman, namely line, and what pertains to the painter, namely the patch of colour. The pure line drawing appears, J. Flaxman (1755–1826) being its first practitioner. Here line is pure outline and has no modelling function so that the plastic illusion is pushed into the background.[2] Figures, landscapes, architecture are represented in pure outline and without shading, a phenomenon worthy of very close analysis. This art of the line has both a certain archaizing quality and also a quality of the irrational and ghostly. It is no mere chance that it succeeds particularly well in representing the spirit world, the world that is both supersensual and cold.

Actually the matter goes further, for we find the idea cropping up that the very last element of sense is to be eliminated, namely the freedom of the hand itself. In a sitting of the revolutionary '*Jury national des arts*' in 1790, we find the painter Hassenfraz declaring, 'I am convinced that all the objects of painting could be rendered with a ruler and compasses.' Certainly this alleged

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[1] Wilhelm Pinder, *Das Problem der Generation in der Kunstgeschichte Europas.*

[2] On Flaxman, cf. Max Sauerlandt in *Zeitschrift für Bildende kunst*, New Series, Vol. XIX, p. 189. Also the outline drawings of Gagneraux (1756–95).

'discovery' is somewhat naïf, yet in the larger historic context, it seems like a kind of shadowy prologue to the 'Constructivists' of around 1900, though the latter were somewhat differently motivated.

As a logical consequence of the extrusion of the three-dimensional, we see something wholly unprecedented, the shadow art of the silhouette, invented by Etienne de Silhouette (1709–1767), which became fashionable about 1760. Even, however, where colour is still tolerated, we find the conviction growing that drawing alone, even outline alone, suffices for the adequate æsthetic expression of a thing and that, ideally speaking, colour is superfluous.[1]

PURE PAINTING

Side by side with the development of the art of pure line, we see from the beginnings of the eighteenth century onwards the conception of a new kind of painting which denies line altogether and is based on the colour patch (Constable, Turner). Like pure line, this too is the consummation of a process in which what was once a unity undergoes a kind of polarization before it finally and completely splits asunder. Later this new trend is to find scientific justification. The nineteenth century took an extreme view in the matter of optics, and defined its position in terms of science. It held that the eye only took in colours and colour patches—it saw no forms or contours.[2]

This release from line and plastic form sets free the dynamic element of colour. 'It is the elemental quality of colour, its intoxicating effect on the emotions, the very fact indeed that it is not the prisoner of things and bodies that relates it to the Romantics.' In Turner's case for instance, though the thing applies more closely to the movements belonging to the middle of the century, one of which aimed at something like a Dionysiac art while the other strove for the fluid painting of pure light.

By thus limiting itself to the factor of the purely two-dimensional patch of colour—which the latest discoveries in psychology

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[1] Cf. Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790), §14.

[2] Th. Hetzer, *op. cit.*

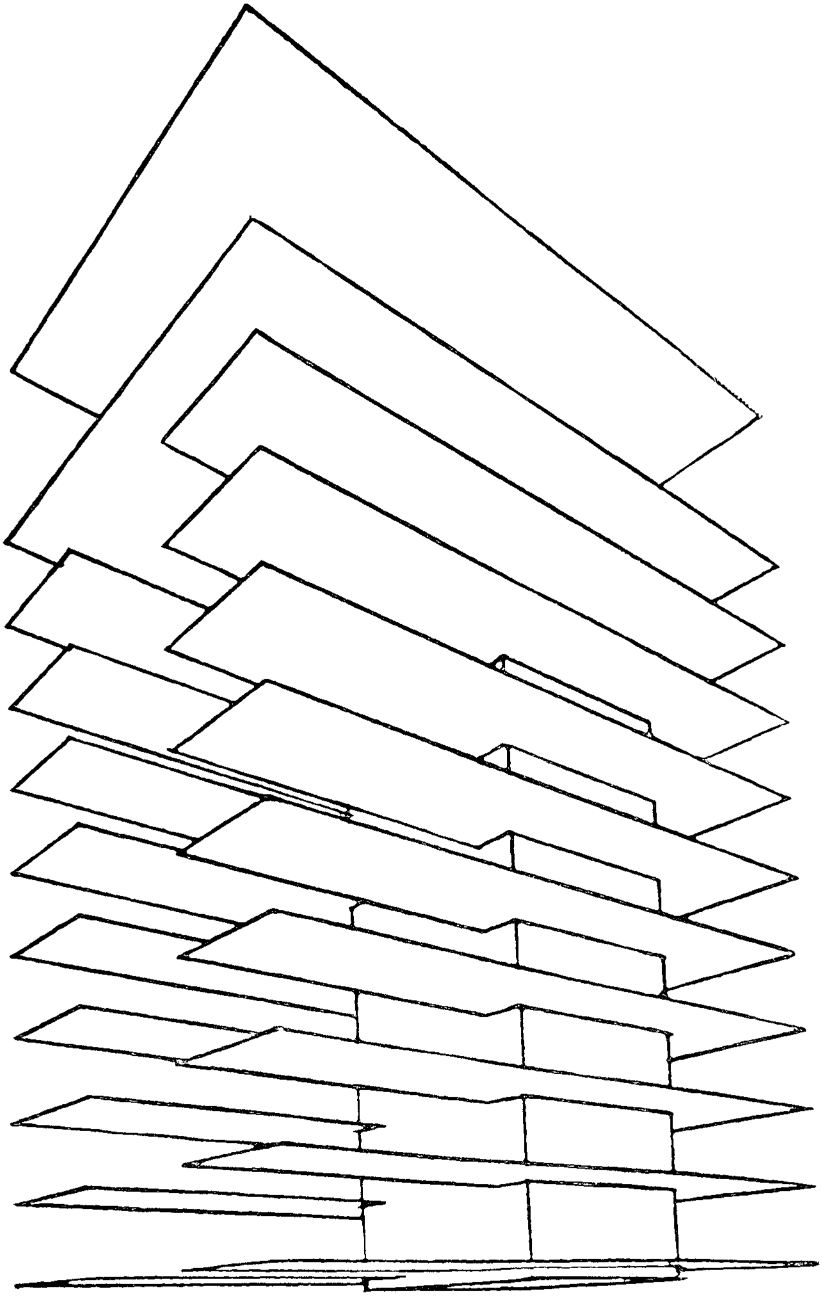
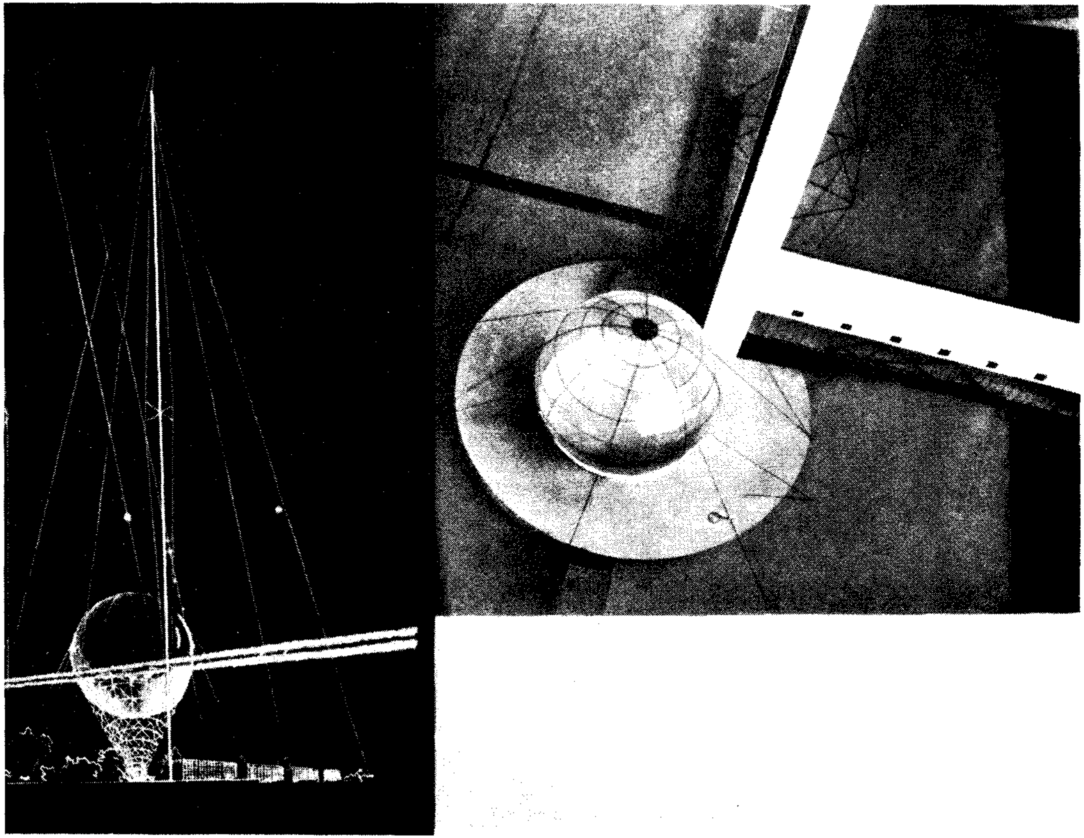


DIAGRAM OF AN AMERICAN WAREHOUSE

'The platform, another form of great symbolic power which proceeds quite logically from the new methods of ferro-concrete construction.' (*See page* 107).

LEONIDOV: DESIGN FOR A SPHERICAL BUILDING OF STEEL AND GLASS FOR A LENIN INSTITUTE NEAR MOSCOW

'One of our ideas for the future is the overcoming of the fundament, of our state of being *bound down to the earth*. This goes even further and demands the overcoming of the forces of gravity as such, it calls for floating bodies . . .' *El Lissitzky*. (*See page* 105.)



Courtesy Anton Schroll & Co., Vienna

claim is the actual way in which colour achieves its æsthetic effect upon us—the picture ceases to have any further part to play in recreating the three-dimensional at all.[1]

'A visit to any museum', says Hetzer, 'will bring home without much difficulty to the student that it was not only the style of eighteenth-century pictures which gave them a direct relationship to the china, the statues and the furniture of the period, they possess in common with them the quality of formed physical substances; the tapestry is something halfway between a picture and an object. A nineteenth-century picture, however, has no longer any relation whatever with other products, neither by reason of the material from which it is produced nor in any other way. It is no longer a tangible object but something purely two-dimensional, and no longer speaks to our sense of touch.'[2]

The art of the line and the art of the colour patch are now diametrical opposites. The one is supersensual, the other speaks directly to our senses—even to our appetites (*die andere ist triebhalf sinnlich*), one serves the cult of beauty, the other serves the cult of life—though it also serves the cult of ugliness. 'It is not till the nineteenth century that we become aware of the yawning gap between the chastity of sculpture and the libido of colour.'

EXTRUSION FROM PAINTING OF THE ELEMENT OF ARCHITECTURE

Following hard upon those trends which extruded the three-dimensional element, the line and the element of colour, others were to follow which weakened or even destroyed the element of architecture.

Since the days of Giotto this architectural element was as much part of the painted picture as was its essentially three-dimensional character. The one implies the other. Figures within the picture stand and move upon a firm basis, whether this be an architectural one or the variously distant sections of a natural landscape. Even in the most diffuse pictures of the eighteenth century, in those of Guardi for instance, the sense of touch reaches out to the uttermost limits of distance, and all that the eye beholds is related to the same basis which is also the basis of architecture. Even figures floating or flying in the air are conceived within the framework of a perspective, built up right along the line upon a perpendicular to the surface of the earth.

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[1] Cf. J. von Allesch, *Die ästhetische Erscheinungsweise der Farben* (Berlin, 1925). Also *Kritische Berichte* (1932), pp. 214–224.

[2] Th. Hetzer, *op. cit.*

Now, however, this architectural framework of the picture is gradually removed. Scientific perspective is broken up. The assumption on which art had rested since the days of the Renaissance is now abolished—the assumption that the eye, performing its function from any given point (*das 'fixierte' Auge*), is capable of taking in the spatial relationships of things.

It is quite true that there is still much talk of 'building' pictures, but there is no longer any willingness to recognize the real foundation of such building as is apparent in the old pictures which in this sense were really 'built'. That foundation was the earth. The architectural element disappears from the picture and is replaced by a purely two-dimensional and ornamental arrangement of the subject. A spirit, fluid, and the very opposite of that animating architecture is also shown by the painter's growing love for the unstable world of dreams.

PICTURES CONFINED TO THE PURELY VISIBLE

In painting, drawing (and sculpture) there is now a tendency to refrain from trying to make a picture or statue say more than can be taken in by the eye alone. Anything superadded by mere thought or knowledge, the transcendental mythical or allegorical content of the picture, for instance, is now eliminated. Thus the picture is made to confine itself to its visible content alone. A typical feature of this pictorial positivism is that the title confines itself only to the purely material content which the senses can apprehend and prevents the beholder's imagination from ranging further. Now we no longer have 'Diana and the Nymphs' but simply 'Bathing Women'. No 'Venus' but simply 'Recumbent Nude' or 'Sitting Nude', no 'Vanitas' but simply 'Woman with Mirror', no 'Madonna' but simply 'Woman and Child'.

'ABSOLUTE PAINTING', 'ABSOLUTE DRAWING' AND 'ABSOLUTE SCULPTURE'

In the end there appear at the close of the nineteenth century, and on the extreme left wing—it is the symptom of the change that has occurred—those various movements which see the ideal of pure painting in the complete extrusion from the art of all the objects of the real world. In Dadaism, in a rather analogous manner, speech renounces its explanatory and representational function.

The ideal towards which men are drifting reveals itself in the concept of 'absolute music'. Thus drawing is to be a music of abstract lines, painting a music of abstract colour patches, and sculpture a music of abstract bodies in a higher geometrical ordering, and all three are to stand beside the new architecture which is a music of geometrical bodies or geometrical surfaces erected into a space. All arts are to be entirely 'autonomous', 'autarchic' and 'absolute'.

BY-PRODUCTS OF THE PICTURE'S DISINTEGRATION

The result of all these superimposed processes—all actuated in the last resort by the striving after purity on the part of the individual arts—is the complete disintegration of the composite art work. Moreover, it is not only the macrocosm of the 'great' composite work of art which disintegrates, the foundation for which was created by architecture, but also the microcosm of the picture which, since the days of Giotto right up till the end of the Baroque, was an epitome in a two-dimensional medium of all the fine arts, a composite work of art in miniature, and for that reason was really the great work of art of that age. The picture, too, is resolved into its constituent elements.

At the end of this break-up process all the potentialities inherent in this dissolution can be observed one beside the other often in the work of a single artist. In the experiments of a painter like Paul Klee they are tried out systematically one after the other. 'I first attempted pure drawing, I attempted pure chiaroscuro, while in colour I attempted all the subsidiary experiments which the colour spectrum induced me to try. Thus I worked out the various types and combinations of types of painting, colour-charged chiaroscuro painting, painting in complementary colour, polychromatic painting and totally chromatic painting. Then I tried all manner of syntheses of pairs of types, ever combining and re-combining, and in doing so always cultivating the pure element to the very maximum.'[1]

Ultimately there comes a point when the further resolution of any art into its alleged elements becomes impossible. By that time, of course, the unity of the arts has perished beyond recall. Now a building stands in a landscape to which it has no relation whatever; a piece of sculpture stands in equally isolated fashion between two pieces of architecture or between a pair of pictures, while a picture hangs disjunctively on some bare and alien wall. A sterile juxtaposition, a *komposition*, a word that Goethe loathed, has finally replaced the old living connubium of the arts.

THE DEATH OF THE COMPOSITE WORK OF ART

Simultaneously there begins the tearing asunder of such composite works of art as still remain, but of the old churches, castles and palaces there issues from the end of the eighteenth century onward an endless stream of works of each, separate and isolated from its context, fragments of what once had been a coherent whole. Torn from their mother soil, they wander, like forlorn refugees, to take shelter in the art-dealer's market or into the soulless institutional magnificence of public or private art galleries.

The museum now comes into its own, its aider and abetter being the art dealer, and the whole set-up is sustained by the spread of an attitude in matters pertaining to art, which concentrates on the individual work, accepts this recent and unnatural divorce between the arts as though it were a law of nature, and even separates the 'what' from the 'how' in the individual work of art, the 'form' from the 'content'.

In the museum the separation between the arts becomes permanent. Things which were originally integral parts of a single whole are shown forth after this heartless process of dismemberment as exhibits arranged in a variety of departments. Indeed it may well happen that constituent parts of a single altar may find themselves thus scattered between one department and another, the painted work finding its official domicile in a picture gallery, the carvings in a sculpture section, while equipment and ornamental parts find a resting-place in a handicrafts museum.

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[1] Paul Klee, *Über die Moderne Kunst.*

That which on a larger and even more terrible scale was destined to be suffered by human beings, namely that they were to be forcibly torn from their native soil, 'resettled' and have their families broken up—is here prophetically enacted at the expense of ancient sanctuaries of art.

The matter is made worse by writers on art and on the history of art, for these also tend to follow in this matter the departmentalized thinking of the nineteenth century and split up the arts into a number of categories, and insist on splitting up the different arts even when in their historical portrayals they are dealing with some work of the past in which those arts were united. Thus they sanction and support the unnatural situation which has developed in our museums, instead of treating it as the unavoidable consequence of a temporary emergency.

A real resistance to the isolation of the arts was evident in the longing of the Romantic movement for the composite work of art. That movement's longing for the composite work of art was real despite the fact that it never developed the power to restore it. Only in the Neo-Renaissance does it really get revived. Semper and Wagner were filled to their finger-tips with a sense of the unity of the arts. 'We can assume', writes Semper, 'that architecture only broke away from the other arts when these last had begun to decay', for architecture had originally combined all other arts with itself and had been the ordering power for all. But this counter-movement was no more than a delaying *entr'acte* in the drama of disintegration.

THE DEATH OF ICONOLOGY

Because this age is one to which the composite work of art and the interrelation between the arts have become things without meaning, it is incapable of creating a pictorial world that has any positive import of its own, a pictorial world, that is to say, in which every picture and every theme of every picture has its own precise and necessary significance as part of a larger whole.[1] More and more the subject-matter ceases to be a thing of any particular concern, while the question whether its spiritual content, as distinguished from its formal character, fits it for the particular place where it happens to hang become a matter of equally small importance. Nowhere is sterility so much in evidence as in the field of iconological invention and composition. Indeed the very meaning of the thing has been lost. Writers on art in the immediate past no longer took account of the full spiritual significance of the composite work of art, they no longer took account of that which it strove to convey. In the matter of iconology they ruthlessly divorced form content, so that under their hands iconology degenerated into iconography, a science of fragments.

Nor do such writers take note of the fact that architecture had a representational character, that it had a story to tell, that architecture played its part together with all the other arts and not the fine arts alone in showing forth things that were beyond sensible experience, that it helped to make 'pictures' of Heaven or of the cosmos, and that this was its function from the days of the Sumerian ziggurats and the Egyptian temples down to the Gothic cathedrals and the kingdom of light at Versailles.

It is only now that students of art are beginning once more to see the composite work of art as it was and feel all the fullness of life that was within it. It is only now that the professors of this subject and the others who write about it have begun to realize the nature of the actual subject-matter of their branch of study, which is not and cannot be the history of the individual arts nor the abstract definitions of different styles. Their essential subject-matter can only be the history of the various composite works of art, their decay and the secularization of the by-products of that decay.[2]

[1] W. Mrazek, *Die barocke Deckenmalerei in der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts in Wien und den beiden Erzherzogtümern ober und unter der Enns.* Vienna Dissertation, 1947.

[2] H. Sedlmayr, *Architektur als abbildende Kunst,* in Proceedings of the Akademie der Wissenschaften in Vienna, 1948.

This would at long last put an end to the unnatural and hideously costly divorce between the history of art on the one side, and iconography on the other, while iconography itself will be transformed from the fragmentary scrutiny of isolated things to the wholeness of genuine iconology, to a new science, that is to say, which would lay bare the real *raison d'être* of these works.

This new attitude on the part of those whose business it is to write and lecture about art shows us at least one thing very clearly—it shows us that the reunion of the arts is something which has once more moved into our age and field of vision. Whether a real need for a rebirth of the thing will result from it, and how, if it does result, it will be satisfied, no man can now foretell.

THE DEATH OF THE ORNAMENT

With the separation of one art from another there is connected a development of the most far-reaching importance—the death of the ornament. No ornament that possessed real vitality was born during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and this creative collapse is all the more violent in so far as the Rococo at its end had developed the art of ornament to a high degree of varied richness and felicity.

We cannot by any means place the whole responsibility for the death of the ornament on the arrival of the new industrial materials, though these amorphous substances really do seem incapable of bringing new ornaments into the world. Yet any explanation that sought to base itself on that fact alone would not go nearly deep enough, for the ornament was already in its death agony before the new materials had made their appearance at all. The divorce between structure and decoration did not begin, as Le Corbusier supposed, with construction in metal. It began with the 'applied' ornaments at the end of the eighteenth century, and the real cause of the ornament's death is roughly this. It is the very essence of the ornament that its character, both as to shape and colour, grows naturally out of the body that carries it, be that body a piece of architecture, a utensil of some kind, or, to give the earliest instance, the human form itself. But what remote justification for its existence can there be, when that same body, striving for a supposed purity, rejects for that very reason the very idea of an ornament? The ornament is indeed the only category of art which cannot possibly achieve autonomy—and so the ornament dies.

The fact is that there can be no such thing as a 'pure' ornament as such. The very conception is nonsensical. It can, of course, divest itself of the objective content and allusion which from the very beginning to the end has been inherent in it, and can transform itself into a purely abstract design of lines and spots, but it does not become more essentially an ornament by doing so.

Again the revivals of past styles of architecture have brought with them no rebirth of the ornaments originally native to those styles. Indeed, it is in the ornament more than in any other aspect that the lack of vitality which affects these revivals is most clearly shown. Our age seems to have lost the understanding that an ornament must have *depth* in other senses than the spatial one, that it must set up a spiritual relationship and express a kind of contact between men and things. An abstract pattern can no longer possess that power.

THE DISSOLUTION OF THE BOUNDARIES OF ART

We have seen how in their nervous concern for their own purity the various arts shut themselves off from each other. In doing so they contrive, first unconsciously and later deliberately, to dissolve the frontiers of the kingdom of art itself so that no one can any longer tell where that kingdom ends and the other provinces begin.

To some extent this quality has always been inherent in the landscape garden for it always tends to fade into nature, but the new garden is markedly an unfinished work, in which nature works alongside of the artist; for nature uninterruptedly changes the garden according to the seasons, and does so to an increasing extent as the years and the decades go by. It would, of course, be quite wrong to assess this work of art on the assumption that it was only perfect at one moment of time, at one particular season, that is to say, and one particular stage of the cycle of growth, and that all previous and subsequent conditions thereof were of less account and less pleasing in their effects. That was not how the creators of this new art looked upon the matter. It is not at any one season of the year alone but in all that this perishable work of art has its full significance, for the garden is indeed as changeable as nature herself, and its protean quality is actually felt to be one of the things that adds to its artistic value.

Yet precisely because it is in a continual state of flux, the form which its creator has willed it to take cannot always find full expression, and so it may well occur that as one stands before any particular example of the gardener's art, it is possible to say where the work of artistic creation ends and where it is nature that is the artist. 'In so far as this is true the garden lies in a strangely fluid borderland between nature and art.'[1] This situation is new.

This wiping out of frontiers is not a thing that holds good of only one particular marginal zone, it goes to the very roots of the problem of art and derives from a completely new conception of the relation in which nature and art should stand to one another. 'In that moment where one begins to think of creation as something formed by art and equates the natural with the perfect, it is not only the frontier between art and nature wiped out but that between natural beauty and the beauty of art. The result is that the age has begun to make use of an extremely elastic conception of the whole nature of a work of art.'[2]

In much the same way the frontier was to be wiped out at the beginning of the twentieth century between architecture on the one hand and the construction on the other of machines, vehicles, etc. The quality of creating beauty in perfection, once attributed to nature, is now ascribed to the engineer and his professional kinsmen, the boundary between the beauty of functional aptness and that of art (which must always root in the transcendental) becomes involuntarily blurred.

The third instance of the process occurs in the provinces of painting and sculpture where the borderline is made to disappear between genuine art and the pictorial efforts of primitive and untrained persons, children and lunatics. People persuade themselves that the untrained faculties of such usually uneducated people can produce things which are more beautiful and more perfect than can be produced by the trained and educated, or 'miseducated' as these last are usually defined.

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[1] Hallbaum, *op. cit.*

[2] *Ibid.*

A special case is presented when the boundary line becomes fluid between the work of 'abstract' draughtsmen and painters, and that kind of ornamentation in which the pattern has been produced more or less by accident, as in marbled papers, sprayed work, and the deliberate chaos of camouflage. 'Thus art finally reaches the stage where it is concerned not with that which is beyond the power of language to express but with that which is inexpressible because it is so far below it.'[1]

This, then, is the fate of art when its unity is destroyed. It collapses into the arms of the photographer and the engineer or fades away into the land of the dream.

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[1] Wilhelm Pinder, *Das Problem der Generation* (2nd edition, Berlin, 1928).

IV

THE ATTACK ON ARCHITECTURE

IT has not yet been fully recognized—and is even for the most part denied by those who have better reason than anybody else for being aware of it—that an attack, partly deliberate and partly involuntary, has been proceeding against architecture ever since the eighteenth century came to an end. This attack has been carried out in a number of minor operations of varying strength and from a number of different points. The climax was reached in the twenties of the present century, and it was then that, conscious of their strength, the enemies of architecture threw off the mask, and openly demanded its abolition. Actually, of course, the position of this art—it was once the leader of the rest—had for the past hundred and fifty years been in steady process of being undermined.

It was the 'garden-revolution' that constituted the first phase of this protracted campaign.

THE GARDEN REVOLUTION, THE DETHRONEMENT OF ARCHITECTURE

The garden revolution was a revolt not only against the dominance of architectural forms within the garden, but against the primacy of architecture as such, a primacy to which the garden had till then been subordinated. Even the most extensive architectural garden, though its avenues might extend for miles into the landscape, has its point of reference in an architectural core.

So long as the character of the new form of free garden was still determined by such an architectural centre, the revolution was not really complete. In the case of Stowe Park, the famous first example of the new trend, an old formal park was changed in 1720 into something having the form of a free landscape, but the great house remained the centre of the whole, and the whole park is ordered around it. The great lawn that stretches over the whole is only a kind of translation into free and organic forms of the essential centre of the architectural garden. Even if the building were removed, one would feel still that it is here in *this* particular place that there was a centre to which the whole pattern referred. It is only when the landscape garden treats architecture as a mere addition that the change is complete. From now on pieces of architecture within a park are mere incidents. They stand about in the landscape, at haphazard and without formal relation to it, indeed they are often tucked away in a corner, and if they were to be removed, nobody would notice the difference. Here the curtailment of the sovereignty of architecture begins, and we have something that never existed before, a composite work of art, wholly anti-architectural in spirit, to which architecture is subordinate. Contemporaries are quite justified when they speak of a revolution.

ARTIFICIAL RUINS

A thing now makes its appearance in this non-architectural garden that is as radical an innovation in the history of art as is the landscape garden itself. It is the artificial ruin, a thing that must by no means be confused with those artificial grottoes that have existed since the Renaissance, for these last are intended to give the illusion of the natural, whereas the artificial ruin is meant to show the decay of the work of man.

It is usual to regard the artificial ruin merely as a more or less indispensable adjunct to the nature garden, as one among a number of devices for exciting a particular kind of sentiment, the others being caverns, grottoes, arbours, temples of friendship, weeping willows, etc., and indeed that was in the first instance the character that attached to it. It evokes, as does the very park itself, a certain feeling of purgative melancholy and is a kind of reminder of the transience of all earthly things.

Yet this building of artificial ruins also indicates a kind of breakdown, one may even say a violent breakdown, of that sense which it is peculiarly the function of architecture to satisfy. For what is here visibly under attack is that affirmation of permanence which is implicit in every piece of architecture. In its stead architecture is actually shown in process of dissolution, a dissolution which is progressive in so far as nature takes a hand and completes the disintegration which the artist started out to portray.

Today when ruins have become all too familiar and we appreciate their significance all too well, it is no longer possible to look upon the artificial ruin as no more than a harmless essay in the picturesque. If it were correct to regard such things as being no more than picturesque, then that would merely prove that our conception of the picturesque was the mortal enemy of everything for which architecture stands. No, the ruin shows us clearly, like a revealing dream, that even at this stage the death of architecture is already desired.

Such an interpretation appears to find support in the fact that in the painting of that day we not only find portrayals of famous or imaginary ruins but—a monstrous omen—come across cases where the painter's imagination has sought to envisage the ruins of buildings that were intact at the time. It is in this fashion, for instance, that Hubert Robert (1733–1808), that most skilful painter of architectural subjects, treats the famous gallery of the Paris Louvre, while C. D. Friedrich shows us the suppositious ruins of Meissen Cathedral and of the Church of St. James in Greifswald. Here the painter's imagination verged on the prophetic. No other culture, no other epoch had till then envisaged these possibilities. Now in a world of real ruins we cannot but shudder as we contemplate these things.

THE FIRST (UNCONSCIOUS) REVOLUTION AGAINST ARCHITECTURE

Round about 1770, twenty years before the outbreak of the French Revolution, we encounter for the first time in the whole history of architecture a building projected in the shape of a complete sphere.

It has the appearance of a spaceship that has touched down upon the earth, which it only touches at one point, and a gangway has been laid alongside it. The author of this fantastic design for a building intended to house the bailiff, is Claude Nicolas Ledoux, the leader of the architectural revolution. The design is in no way related to the purpose of the building, and indeed the whole thing seems quite insane, so much so there seems to be little point in entering into a serious discussion of this aberration. Nevertheless, this monstrosity does make it clear, as by a sudden lightning flash, that we are confronted here by the greatest upheaval architecture has ever known; and indeed for such an idea even to become conceivable, nay, for it to be entertained even as a sort of fantastic exercise of the imagination, it was first necessary for architecture to be equated with geometry.

The sphere is an unarchitectural, or even an anti-architectural form. Cubes, pyramids, cylinders, and cones may be considered as the 'basic' forms of building. The hemisphere might be added to the latter—but not the sphere. The pyramid has in certain epochs been used as the basic form of entire buildings and so has the hemisphere—but never the sphere itself. Even in the case of the other forms named, certain limits have to be set if we are to transform them from geometrical to basic architectural forms. The cylinder, for instance, is an architectural form only when it stands upright, not when it lies upon its side, the cone only when it rests upon its circular base, not when it is balanced upon its point. That alone is truly tectonic which recognizes the earth as its basis. Even certain types of architecture that seem to have an airborne quality, such as the Gothic and the Baroque, recognize the earth as their potential resting-place, to which they are related and to which they come soaring down. The sphere denies this earth basis.

Where the sphere is made the basic form of a building, we must assume a dogma which rests upon two axioms:

First, the geometrical—or rather the stereometric—basic forms are also the basic architectural forms.[1]

Second axiom: every basic geometrical form is capable of becoming by itself the basic form of an entire building.

This dogma has become widespread since the French Revolution; it is not merely to be inferred from actual plans, but has repeatedly been stated in so many words as a principle of 'modern' architectural theory. It has penetrated into the handbooks and lexicons of this movement as a self-evident definition of that art which considers itself to be *par excellence* the art of the builder. Indeed, it is the test by which the different schools of post-revolutionary architecture are to be distinguished from one another, and turns entirely on the question whether they have inwardly accepted this dogma with all its corollaries, or whether they have not.

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[1] On the stereometric as a category of the 'New Building', cf. F. Schmalenbach in the resumés of the Fourteenth International Congress for Art History (1936), pp. 145–146.

It was the so-called Architecture of the Revolution before and around 1789 that set up this dogma, and 1793 is the date of Du Fourny's utterance: '*L'architecture doit se régénerer par la géometrie.*' This explains why it is that in the designs of that time the basic geometric forms of cube, pyramid, cylinder and cone can be seen next to one another with full equality of right and status—a thing that had never occurred before. In such circumstances the appearance of the sphere as an architectural form is quite logical, and equally logical, from the point of view of this dogma, is the design of an entire building, that of the House of the River Authority in the form of a cylinder lying on its side. This, too, was the work of the leader of the architectural revolution, Ledoux.

It should be noted, by the way, that the architectural revolution precedes the political one. The two spherical designs of Ledoux which already anticipate the upheaval in architecture that took place a little later, both date back to before 1773.

When we realize that the new revolutionary architecture is really quasi-geometric, a whole number of architectural peculiarities can be explained which now appeared for the first time and were further developed in the second architectural revolution between 1900 and 1920. In this work I can merely enumerate them, I have dealt with their origin in greater detail elsewhere.[1]

Most of these peculiarities can be discovered in the actual spherical building, the 'critical form', and we find them again in a more or less pronounced form in the 'modern' architecture of yesterday. Here is a list: the tendency to be loosened from the earth basis, a character which makes it possible for top and bottom

[1] '*Die Kugel als Gebäude, oder das Bodenlose*', *op. cit.*

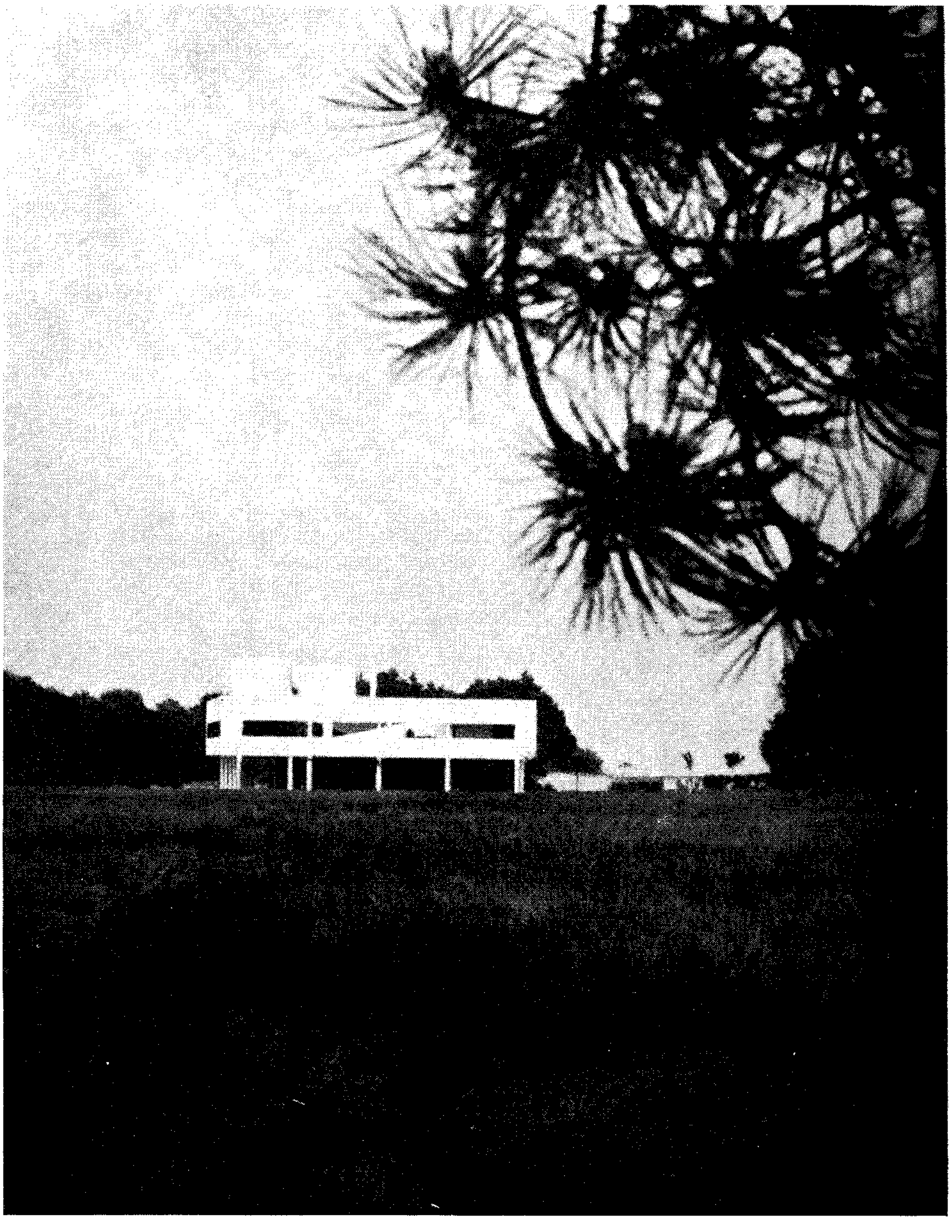
to be confused—an affection for the flat roof is connected with this—an affection for homogeneous smooth unbroken surfaces that lack all plastic elements and any kind of profile. Further there is a new way of arranging the basic forms; they are combined without any kind of connecting design, or placed on top of one another like so many boxes. There is also the crystal-hard severance of the building from its surroundings; even when at a later stage the walls are replaced by glass or are in some places completely removed, sharp invisible contours cut off the building, it does not, as formerly, coalesce with the open space about it. There is now a complete absence of any organic transition between buildings and landscape, these 'pure' pieces of architecture seem to have tumbled out of a blue sky into a nature that is equally pure. Here isolation has become an absolute value in itself 'for man is everywhere isolated' (Ledoux).

It was not therefore the new materials that brought forth the new ideas, the ideas were there first. Long before concrete existed, we have the typical concrete forms. Nevertheless, there undoubtedly is a kind of kinship between the new anti-plastic materials, cast iron, glass, steel, concrete, and the new ideas.

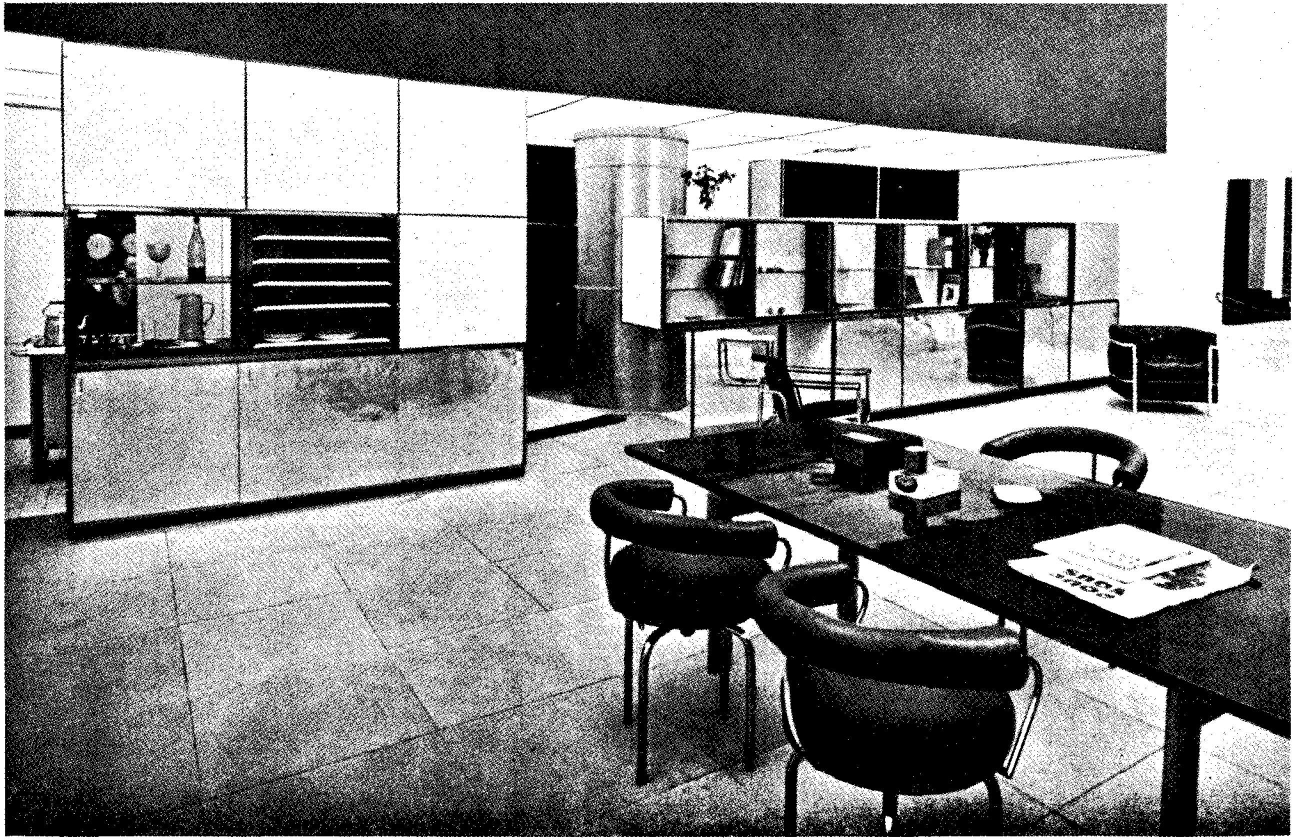
Our knowledge of the architecture of the revolution has shown the historical connections of the architecture of the early twentieth century to be very different from what had first been supposed. The rediscoverer of the revolutionary architecture, Emil Kaufmann, welcomes the appearance therein—the long-awaited appearance seemingly—of an architecture that has really become autonomous.[1]

The word 'autonomous' implies that architecture under Ledoux had as it were become conscious of its own true nature—it was the same idea that animated Loos and Le Corbusier in their own work—whereas in the Renaissance and the Baroque it showed its actual architectonic values in an impure admixture with those of painting and sculpture and even with those of landscape and was therefore a heteronomous element among arts that were subject to different laws. The new architecture of the revolution was therefore one that had achieved the maximum possible 'purity',

[1] Emil Kaufmann, *Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier* (Vienna, 1932).



LE CORBUSIER: VILLA SAVOYE, POISSY, 1930
'One of the ideals of the time is the *boîte en l'air*. Resting upon its supports upon the lawn, it suggests a space-ship that has just landed.' (*See page* 107.)



LE CORBUSIER: APARTMENT, 1929

'The material of the machine is more or less out of pure sentiment applied to objects which had been made of stone and wood.' (*See page* 110.)

e.g. was to the greatest possible extent uncontaminated by these admixtures, an architecture absolute and 'free'.

Unfortunately this whole conception is unsound. We have seen that the architecture of the revolution had put itself under an alien domination much more inhuman than did that of the Renaissance, namely that of pure geometry; moreover, by extruding everything that was alleged to be non-architectonic, it ceased to be a co-ordinating power for the other arts.

'The uncanny thing', says Hoeltje, 'is the profound justice of the fact that so long as architecture did not break with her natural position of dependence, she remained truly "Architectura", the primal and initial art, while in that moment in which she proclaimed her autonomy, she immediately lapsed into a state of slavery in which all her apparent independence was transformed into its opposite.'[1] This went so far that in the second revolution of the 1920's the idea could be voiced that the whole category of the architectural should be done away with.

In the work of Ledoux's successors and among his contemporaries and pupils, in that of Boullée, Lequeu and Vaudoyer, we keep on encountering buildings in the form of a complete sphere, though the form of this is sometimes modified. Thus it is sometimes sunk into the colonnades which support it and the negation of the earth basis is thus concealed. In Lequeu's work it appears as a Temple of the Earth, and in that of Vaudoyer as the 'House of the Cosmopolitans', and indeed how could the cosmopolitan, the man without home or roots, be more suitably housed than in a thing as detached from the earth as a spherical house, to whose tyranny he, as a devotee of that pure reason symbolized by geometry, willingly subjects himself? Both the spherical house and the cosmopolitan are creatures of the same abstract imagination.

The end of the architectural revolution synchronizes with the end of the political one. Napoleon, who detested ideologues, was crowned in 1804. Ledoux died two years later. With that the whole idea disappeared. From then till the end of the nineteenth century there are hardly any designs for spherical buildings to be found.

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[1] G. Hoeltje, Review of E. Kaufmann's book *Von Ledoux bis Le Corbusier*, in *Deutsche Literatur-Zeitung* (1935), Col. 1696–1701.

THE REVOLUTION CONTINUES UNDERGROUND

Yet this mood of abstract geometric reasoning with all its intellectual coldness continued to exercise an influence during the whole period that intervened between the two revolutions, though on the surface the thing seemed to have been completely finished.

To some extent one can still see the geometric cubes of the revolution beneath the surface garments, so sedulously fetched out of history's wardrobe. Indeed, our understanding of this 'geometrical' building actually makes it easier to understand why it should have been followed by the peculiar historicism of the nineteenth century. For since the individual forms and profiles of the latter are merely felt to be additions to the basic geometrical form, there is no particular difficulty in substituting one lot for another. Even before Schinkel, Ledoux's pupil Dubut shows in his designs how the same basic form can be draped first in a Gothic, then in a Renaissance garment. It is true that this situation only obtains during the first phase of historicism. But even where there was faithful copying, it is this geometric undercurrent which lends to all these attempts at revival that quality of lifelessness and stiffness which is so often deplored. What distinguishes the living body from the corpse is the quality of the smallest forms, and in the smallest forms of the so-called 'historical' styles the practised eye will everywhere detect that utter incompetence in the shaping of anything save on geometric lines. There is never anything free or lively about them; they are all constructed with ruler and compasses.

THE REVOLT OF THE ORNAMENT AGAINST ARCHITECTURE

Just before the second revolt against architecture broke out in 1900, the revolt which reached its culminating point in 1920, architecture suffered a sudden and unforeseen attack from another quarter. It was attacked by a new form of ornament. Originating in an English reaction against historicism and machine architecture, a reaction in which the applied arts and ornament began to play a quite unprecedented rôle, it produced in its later phase upon the Continent the *Jugendstil* or *art nouveau*.

As often happens with historical movements, the essential principle of the *Jugendstil* was most clearly formulated after that movement's death. In 1905 Konrad Lange wrote in his essay on Pankok, the *Jugendstil's* principal representative, 'The main feature is the independent organic vivification of the material, the transformation of dead matter to an organic thing, that grows, strives, carries and pushes simply by virtue of the medium of form. . . .

'Thus it is that the creations of the *Jugendstil* have for the eye something of the vitality of those things in fairy-tales which put off their normal mode of being at night and begin to talk to one another and to move from their places. A washstand by Pankok with its bumpy and swelling limbs, presents itself to us like a living organism. When Hermann Obrist designs a chair, then its arms are muscular, gripping things that hold you fast. In other cases this principle has found an expression which does not recreate the function of individual limbs so much as give the whole object the character of being alive.'

This principle softens up all that is tectonic, wherever it encounters it. It begins with the ornament with its typical flowing forms for which the water-lily and the swan's neck provide such ideal decorative motifs. It passes on to type, which now for the first time becomes swollen and wobbly; from there to the 'plasticene' shapes of furniture, and so finally to architecture proper. The walls of houses, the frames of doors and windows, stairways and bannisters bend as though they were made of putty, yielding not only, as in the Baroque, in the horizontal plane, but in the vertical as well.

The attack on the tectonic occurs in this case from the side opposite to that made by the architects of the revolution; it comes not from geometry but from life, from life *per se* which is conceived as a free-ranging, uninhibited urge towards movement, as 'Vitalism'. There are certain analogies to this whole thing in the vital philosophic trends of the age, and it is noteworthy that it is at this time that the atectonic art of ancient Crete is discovered.

It is easy to understand that after this interlude the new 'cubic' architecture of the incipient second revolution must have appeared as simply a return to the architectonic. Actually it was nothing of the kind.

THE SECOND REVOLUTION AGAINST ARCHITECTURE: THE DENIAL OF THE EARTH BASE

> *This great rebuilding of the earlier forms of life began almost unnoticed, and when it began, many experienced a curious shuddering, as though the earth were disappearing under their feet.*—V. IVANOV.

When the idea of the spherical building reappeared between 1890 and 1900, its appearance heralded the outbreak of the new revolution.

When it first was mooted, the idea was purely utopian. There was in the year 1800 no suitable material and a complete absence of the requisite engineering skill by which it could have been realized. It is only with the perfection of the technique of steel construction, which the exhibitions had so markedly advanced, that this utopian project could be translated into reality.

And so in the nineties we again find designs for spherical buildings of huge dimensions, for the Eiffel Tower had now shown that such projects were within the realm of the possible. An example is the design of a Spaniard, a thing artistically completely worthless, which envisaged a steel globe of three-hundred metres diameter as a monument to Columbus—to celebrate the fourth centenary of the discovery of America. In its interior there were to be auditoriums, a museum, and places of amusement. The whole breathed the sensationalism and record-breaking spirit of the great world exhibitions—and it was in an exhibition, the Paris Exhibition of 1900, that the idea of a spherical building first took tangible form. It did so in the shape of a sphere some fifty metres in diameter representing the earth.

It was, however, the Russian futurists of architecture who carried the idea to its uttermost extremes, and the particular example shown in Plate 22 is of enormous symbolic and symptomatic value.

This sphere no longer touches the earth at all. It hovers in the air, a balloon made of glass and iron; apparently it is not actually supported by anything, but is merely caught up by a delicate network of spiderweb-thin metal in the shape of a cone, which only touches the earth on its inverted apex.

The general principle embodied in this construction is frequently formulated by a contemporary, the Soviet architect and writer, El Lissitzky.

'One of our ideas for the future is the overcoming of the fundament, of our state of being *bound down to the earth*. We have developed this idea in a number of designs.' He then refers to a number of designs for buildings which have largely loosed their ties with the earth. They take the form of skyscrapers raised up on slender supports, or of stadiums with hanging tribunes, etc. The writer continues:

'This is the task with which the design for the Lenin Institute on the Lenin Hills near Moscow seeks to grapple. The complex building consists of a tower, which is a library with fifteen million books, flat buildings with reading- and work-rooms, a spherical building, raised up in the air, as a central auditorium for an audience of four thousand. This last can be partitioned off into several sections and the sphere can also be used as a planetarium. It is the task of the engineer to secure statically these elemental volumes, which establish new relations in space. The overcoming of the fundament and of our earth-bound state goes even further and demands the overcoming of the force of gravity as such (!), it calls for floating bodies, it calls for a physico-dynamic architecture.'

The highly abstract character of the architecture of the first revolution is here far surpassed. And one may fairly say that a single such creation, such as that here described, reveals the basic tendencies of the second architectural revolution precisely as Ledoux's 'House for a Bailiff' reveals those of the first.

It shows us first of all that the preference for elements of purely geometrical form still remains. In looking through the designs of the nineteen-twenties, indeed, one finds them all again—cubes, pyramids, cylinders, cones and spheres. But it is only now that ultimate conclusions are drawn from the equation of architecture with geometry. The original dogma tells us nothing about the relation to the earth which geometrical compilation must possess to justify its claim to be architecture, and that is why the second architectural revolution can place the cone on its apex and put a cube on one of its edges, as in the design for the fair-pavilion of the Soviet Trade Delegation in Paris in 1925.[1]

It is again the geometrical forms that delight the abstraction-loving mind: '*Le reveil brutal en nous, parce que foudroyant des joies intenses de la géometrie*' (Le Corbusier). The motivation and justification of these forms is found *a posteriori*. The sphere, for instance, finds its *raison d'être* in a planetarium for which the upper half of that sphere is used. The idea of the planetarium indeed has of itself a special and peculiar fascination for that spirit which flies out beyond the earth, nor was it chance that caused the gaze of Ledoux to rest in frigid adoration on those icy spaces that are peopled by perfect bodies and show forth the majestic operation of rigid mechanical laws. Incidentally, it is significant that in the engraving referred to earlier that shows the circling planets, the earth should be stood on its head with the North Pole pointing downwards. Thus too in the new building top and bottom are interchangeable.

Above all the repulsion from the earth has in the second revolution become incomparably stronger. It is as though the art of flying, long dreamed of and now at last realized, were drawing the very art of building itself away from the earth.

The spherical building of the Lenin Institute has the appearance of floating in the air. In other designs of Russian and French Futurists the buildings hang over the void on carriers, as though they were suspended by cranes. This happens in a design of Ladowski, of 1922, for a 'Restaurant at the edge of a precipice'. The whole of the latter idea is devoid of any practical value whatever, and is born of nothing more than a kind of denial of man's earthbound state; the extreme manner in which the cliff overhangs the water below is almost unnatural and is a sort of symbol of 'bending over the abyss'.

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[1] Cf. the collective volume *Neues Bauen in der Welt: Russland* ('New Building in the World: Russia') edited by El Lissitzky (Vienna, 1930).

The same tendency, however, is to be found everywhere. The passion of the time for putting houses on supports even where there is no necessity for it, a thing of which Le Corbusier is particularly fond, is an expression of the same curious urge. His villa in Poissy resting on its supports upon the lawn suggests a spaceship that has just landed. His floating houses seem to become ever lighter towards their base. His pictures are full of floating transparent things. In his design for the 'Ferme radieuse', even the farmhouse, which surely should be the very essence of the earthbound, is transformed into a relatively tall building stuck on pillars—for all of which the most insubstantial reasons are given.[1] One of the ideals of the time is the '*boîte en l'air*'.

From this peculiar longing there is born in America the suggestion—an allegedly practical one, and one recommended by the economy supposedly effected in materials—according to which a circling dwelling-house with walls of highly polished metal is suspended on a mast—a house that can no longer in any sense said to be 'built' at all.

While the architecture of the second revolution thus denies man's earthbound state, it opens itself in an equally unprecedented manner to the wide universe. It does not do so like the Baroque, whose illusionist painted ceilings denied the fact of the building's enclosure from above and extended the earthly dimensions of the building without any break of continuity into limitless realms of light and air. The architecture of the second revolution produces something very different. Its imaginary extensions into space run parallel to the earth's surface and its houses open sideways.

This tendency to fuse internal with external space produces yet another form of great symbolic power, which proceeds quite logically from the new methods of ferro-concrete construction. By the withdrawing inward of the vertical supports of the building's frame and thus turning them into something resembling the stems of a huge mushroom, there is born the new element of the platform, a primal cell of the 'New Building'. The principle is incorporated in its purest form in various structures used in connection with modern transport, but it is also used in the construction of houses and many-storeyed buildings of various kinds. The huge glass wall, seen through which the various storeys, now enclosed with a transparent membrane, have the appearance of things floating in the air, is a natural corollary of this architectural form, for the nature of that form is to be shut off at the top but to be opened, or rather to reach out, as it were, endlessly towards the sides, and the sublime implication of this fact should be noted. The platform is a kind of materialist baldacchino, and its meaning is well understood by contemporary theory. 'The building should not be a completely self-enclosed entity, it should flow together with the totality of the universe.'[1] This idea appears in the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and Tony Garnier as early as the nineties.

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[1] Illustrated in *Le Corbusier et Pierre Jeanneret*—their collected works, Part II, 1929–1934 (Zürich, 1935).

UNSTABLE ARCHITECTURE

While 'geometric' building tended to deny the earth basis, the second revolution, when at its zenith, produced designs and buildings which attacked yet another fundamental characteristic of architecture, namely, the placing of the main vertical axis, whether of the building or of its parts, along the line of gravity, the plumb-line. These new buildings have the appearance of falling away from this line, the true perpendicular, suggesting, like the leaning Tower of Pisa, that their foundations have given way. Thus Tatlin's design for a monument to the Third International stands completely crooked, and suggests, if anything, the framework of a scenic railway.[2] In other designs the walls lean over outwards out of the true. The house of prayer of a fashionable sect in Dresden, dated 1920, is also all on the slant, a wholly atectonic conception.

Even if these phantasms, in themselves little more than examples of sheer bad taste, are of little importance for the building of the age as a whole, they are nevertheless symptoms of a tendency to deny the essential principles of architecture. Moreover they do not in any sense derive from the typical mentality of the engineer,

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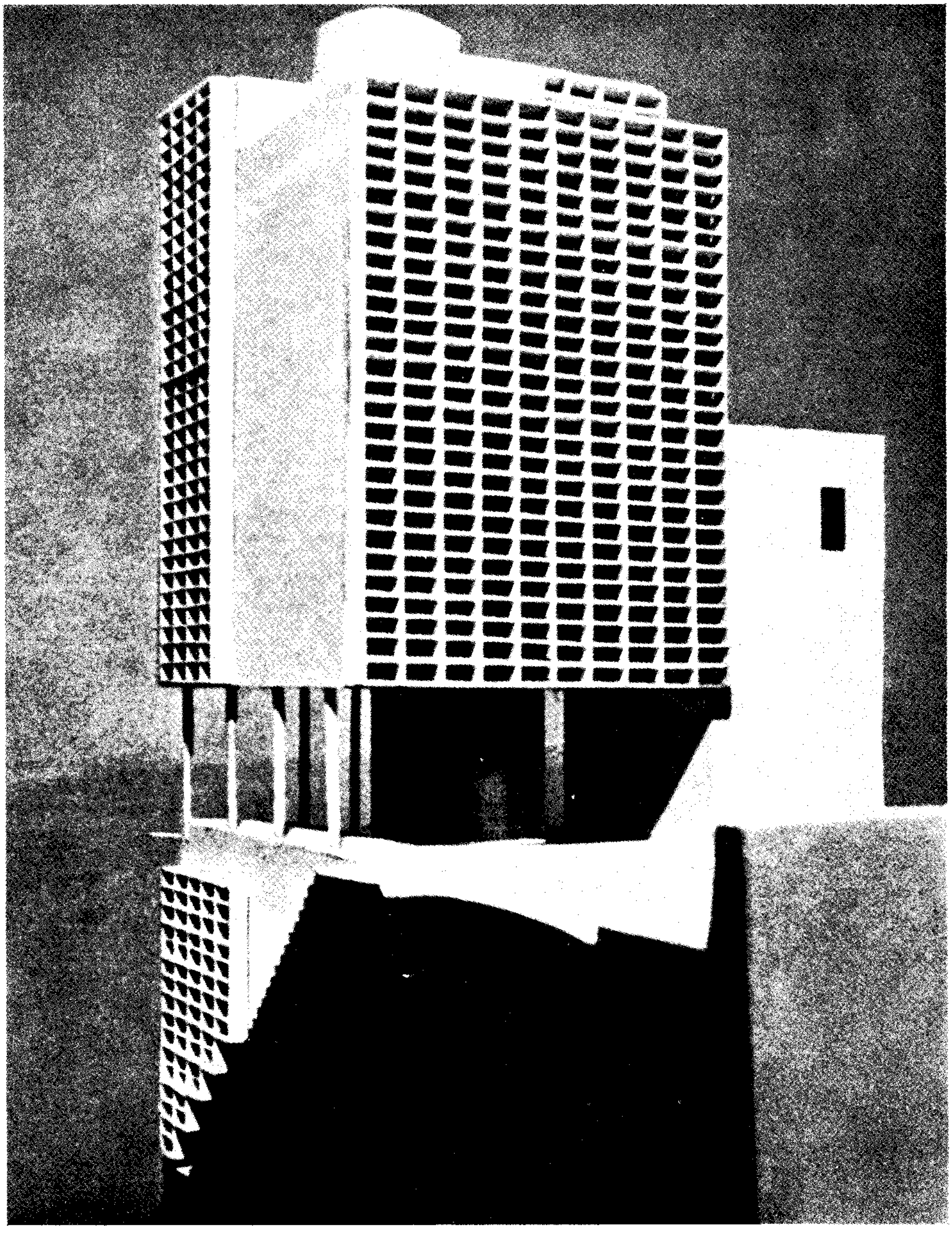
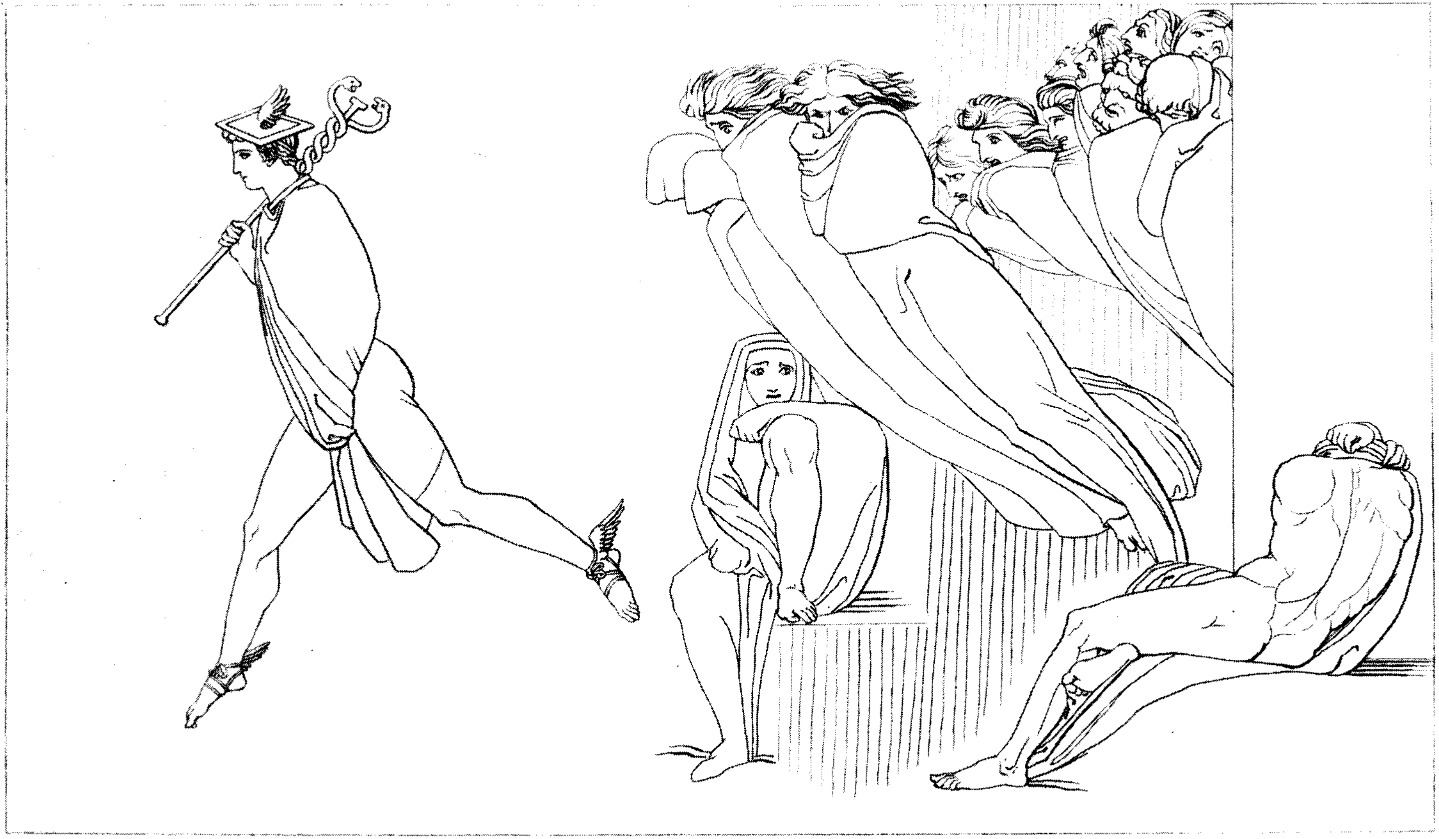
[1] Cf. S. Giedion, *Bauten in Frankreich, Eisenbeton* (Berlin and Leipzig).

[2] Illustrations in *Neues Bauen in der Welt: Russland.*



LE CORBUSIER: MODEL OF A SKYSCRAPER IN ALGIERS
SET ON A STEEP SLOPE, 1933

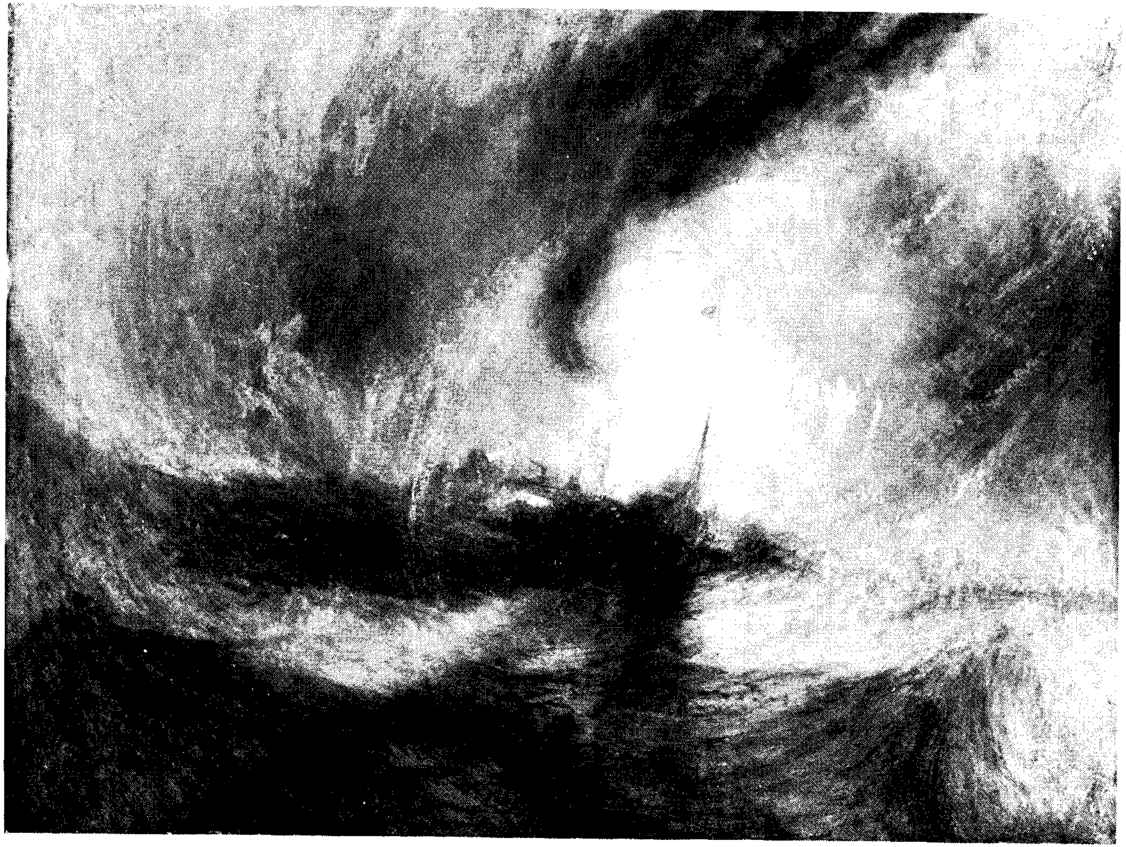
The honeycomb appearance of modern architecture. The building is suspended in the air. The *brise-soleil*, acting as a kind of Venetian blind, makes buildings of glass and metal habitable in the south for the first time. (*See page* 108.)



FLAXMAN: HERMES CONDUCTING THE SHADES OF THE SUITORS TO HADES
(Odyssey XXIV), *circa* 1787 to 1793
'The pure line drawing appears. Here line is pure outline and has no modelling function, so that plastic illusion is pushed into the background.'
(*See page* 83.)

TURNER: STORM AT SEA, 1844

'A new kind of painting which denies line altogether and is based on the colour patch.'
(*See page* 84.)



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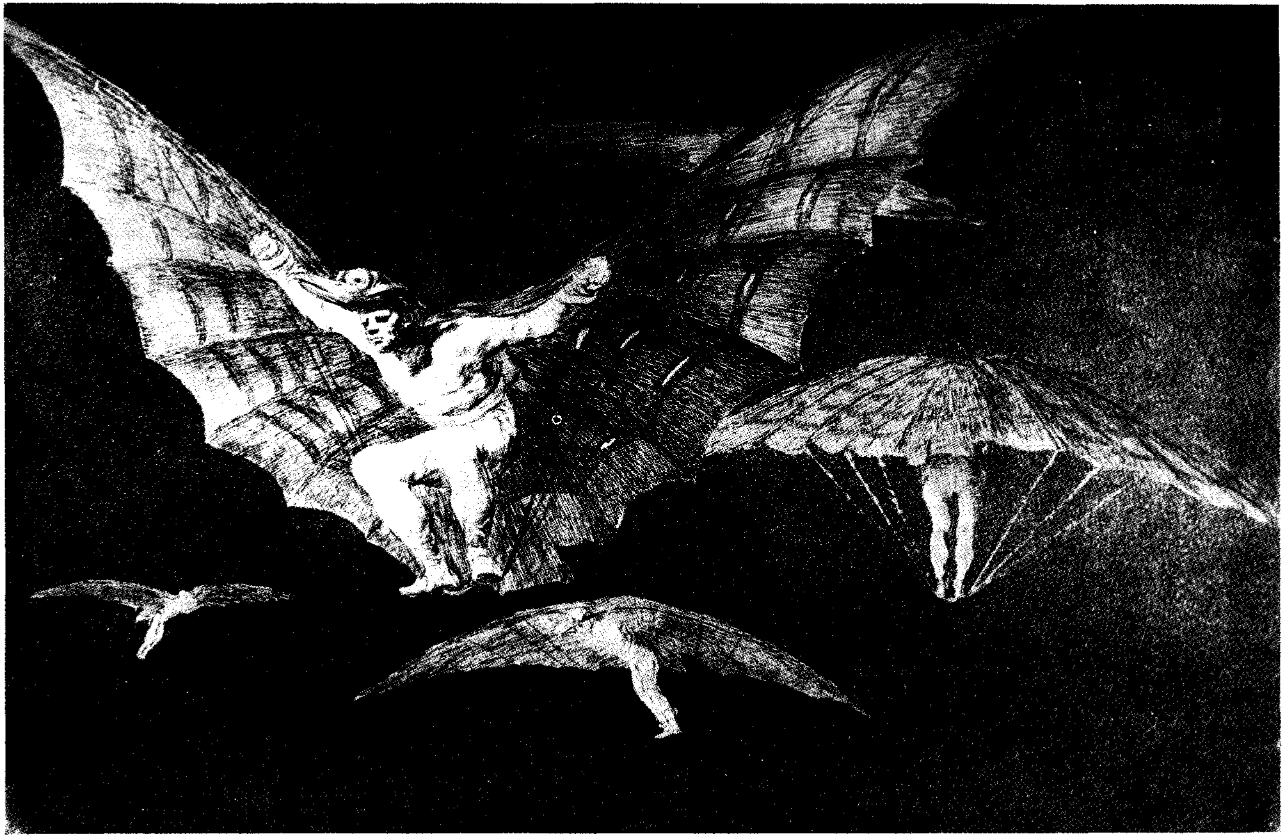

GOYA: DEMONS IN FLIGHT, from *Los Proverbios*

'Man himself and all his world have been delivered to a demon empire.' (*See page* 119.)

but from the spirit of expressionist painting which makes everything unstable and in its pictures shows us the forms of architecture tumbling and collapsing much in the manner in which they might be seen by a drunkard or in an earthquake.

THE ABOLITION OF ARCHITECTURE

The equation of architecture and geometry, on which 'abstract' building reposes, is relegated to the background by the emergence of a new dogma, which really comprehends the older one. That dogma is that every building is a machine. Men no longer see any essential difference between the building of ships, aeroplanes and vehicles on the one hand, and the building of houses on the other. 'Dynamic' construction takes the place of the purely static principle of geometry.

This new dogma, which is sometimes openly proclaimed and on other occasions intrudes in a more veiled form, produces, wherever it is recognized, a number of phenomena that are entirely new. Whole buildings are now given a shape which suggests a machine or part of a machine. The same applies to the various constituent parts of a building, even down to the smallest, to a handle or a door-knob. Ships, aeroplanes and automobiles are treated as formal models on which the new style of living is based, and it is profoundly significant that this new style is shaped by just those things in which man—now a nomad—can have no lasting habitation and in which he can only live for short periods at a time.

At yet another stage the parallelism is even more profound. It belongs to the essence of the machine to be mobile, either in itself or from place to place. That is why we now encounter the idea of the rotating house, which is even occasionally translated into reality. The rotating hall in the 'Golden House' of Nero was actually nothing of the kind. The only thing about it that rotated was the cupola which—and this is significant—represented the heavens. We also encounter something that America had already vaguely anticipated before 1890, namely the utopian conception of movable houses which are really on a level with ships, aeroplanes and caravans—a striking symbol of the fact that man no longer needs a place, upon which he can dwell, and on which he can truly 'build'.

Though the house itself still remains something fixed and firm, the accent is nevertheless on what is mechanical and movable, the lifts, the kitchen furnishings and the bathroom. The walls can often be pushed aside—even the outer walls. Doors and windows generally have some kind of mechanism connected with them. The material of the machine is, more or less out of pure sentiment, applied to objects which till now had been made of stone and wood. There is much advocacy of houses built wholly out of metal.

In most cases these developments lack all rational foundation, for they are anything but practical; indeed, they are simply the results of romanticizing the world of the machine. Unlike the work of those who create real machines, these creations of architects who betray architecture because the idealized engineer has completely destroyed their balance, are, despite all their tall talk of functionalism, not functional at all.

The fact is that the new type of architect has become hopelessly uncertain of himself. He glances over his shoulder at the engineer, he fancies himself in the rôle of inventor and even in that of a reformer of men's lives, but he has forgotten to be an architect. His attitude to purely æsthetic questions is like that of the builder of a car to the designer of the body. The thing is just superstructure.

Meanwhile the actual dogma of the machine, as an artistic canon, however, is expressed quite openly by the theorists who coin such phrases as 'machines for living in' for houses and apply the term 'machine for sitting in' to a chair.

This general philosophy may be said to reach its culminating point in the 1920's when its extreme exponents proclaim the 'Abolition of Architecture' and tend to deny that so narrow a concept has any claim to survive, and in fact they do abolish it by treating architecture as a purely historical category, which, in view of the new state of development reached by the human spirit, is now destined to be absorbed into the general province of the engineer—much as 'superannuated' religion must yield place to science. The great battle of the machine against architecture—and particularly against the older types of architecture—carried on without service to any recognizable concrete purpose of either peace or war, is thus revealed for what it is—an outburst of hate on the part of the machine men against architecture as such. What these now begin to make explicit is what the avant-gardists of the theory had long proclaimed and what is most pregnantly enshrined in the words of Le Corbusier: 'The heart of our ancient cities with their spires and cathedrals must be shattered to pieces and replaced by skyscrapers.'

V

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FRAGMENT

THE perils which menace the various arts—perils which are marks of the epoch but do not really constitute its essential content—are different in measure and form.

Architecture is exposed to the greatest peril of all for it becomes threatened from 1770 onward by the danger of dissolving into geometry and engineering construction. It is also exposed to the danger of conjuring up the spirits of the dead and to all the perils of the theatrical.

The peril to painting is almost equally great. It is threatened by photography, though that threat could never become so deadly as was engineering construction to architecture. It is threatened by a process of abstraction which in the last resort seemed likely to turn it into a mere empty pattern—though that, unless appearances are deceptive, has remained nothing more than an episode. Historicism, which has remained a serious danger for architecture, is no real danger at all for it. Only the most feeble among painters succumb to it, though many of the best architects did precisely that. The real danger to painting shows itself at its zenith—in Cézanne; the danger is that the world of man may be lost in the world of colour and man degraded accordingly.

The sculptor alone throughout the nineteenth century preserves something of the dignity of man, indeed he can never lose that dignity as fully as the rest. His danger is that he may be carried away by painting or get stuck in a dead classicism. In the main sculptors are more serious men than architects. They have a deeper root. It is no mere chance that a sculptor like Rodin should be one of the most honoured of nineteenth-century artists.

Sculpture is the essentially conservative art in all these crises. It is true that there is also among sculptors a tendency towards the two-dimensional. Nineteenth-century sculpture often recedes into the two-dimensional—even if it does it quite inconspicuously. This trend had actually been developing since the end of the Baroque and it was later to receive theoretical defence by a sculptor, Hildebrand (1847–1921). Even fully rounded sculpture had tended to become a 'hidden art of relief', but the transitions are subtle and in a general review can scarcely be perceived. As in painting, a certain instability comes into evidence; a subject like Rodin's *Tumbler* is not only unthinkable in the Baroque but unthinkable in any phase of European art since the ancient Cretan.

Yet man remains quite exclusively the central theme of sculpture. Sculpture can never quite dehumanize itself as painting has done, without surrendering its very existence as an art. Attempts to transform it into an abstract art are—despite Archipenko—of far less importance than similar attempts in painting. A meaningless form in sculpture is always in danger of being merely ridiculous, nor can the new materials seriously endanger it, despite what one hears of sculpture in glass. Even in the age of steel castings, of concrete and of glass, the sculptor's materials remain what they have always been—wood, clay, stone and bronze, and it is in this art that tradition is most alive, for human dignity, plastic power, and nearness to the timeless Greek are but different aspects of a single thing. When one turns the pages of some work on modern art and gets to the sculptors, to Rodin and to Maillol, one is in another world, and in a purer one; and often it is sculpture that carries the architectonic idea through the insecurities of our time.

THE TORSO

Yet despite all this, sculpture too can show its critical manifestations, which throw their light on the whole position of art, and one of the most illuminating has been laid bare by Herbert von Einem in a short but penetrating study of the subject. It is the simple fact that the torso as a complete and self-sufficient subject for the sculptor was a thing unknown till the second half of the nineteenth century.[1]

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[1] Herbert von Einem, 'Der Torso als Thema der bildenden Kunst', in *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*, Vol. 29 (1935). My own exposition is based on this work, and I have quoted certain passages verbally.

It is true that torsos have existed since the sixteenth century in the form of sculptors' experimental designs, and, taken purely from the point of view of outward appearance, they are undoubtedly preliminary stages on the way to the self-sufficient torso of later days. But it is characteristic that Baroque torsos are always *bozzetti*, designs like sketches for a painting, and that nobody thought of these designs or 'sketches' as of finished things. The Baroque placed no thematic value on the torso. The same applies to classicism and the Romantics, as it also does to past ages, to antiquity and to medieval times.

The torso appears for the first time as an independent artistic theme in the work of Rodin. In a few works of course, the nature of the original conception is uncertain. There can be no doubt, however, that the figure of Meditation in the Victor Hugo memorial was conceived as a self-sufficient torso, at any rate the arms are missing in its final form, and this is probably the first example of such a thing.

'It is the first time that the subject and its artistic form are completely divorced, that the subject's rights are impaired by the demands of the artistic form. One of the most moving of Rodin's creations in this category is his so-called "Cathedral", which is nothing but a pair of praying hands, whose fingers are inclined towards one another after the manner of a vault. It is a fragment that is not really a fragment, a form which is merely outwardly suggested by the object which is its ostensible theme.'[1]

'Since Rodin the torso has become a favourite theme.' It is a favourite one among the newer artists for whom subjects no longer possess their own objective and individual significance. Where, however, the inherent and individual values of the subject are respected, as they are for instance by Hildebrand and Barlach, there the torso, even in modern art, is conspicuous by its absence.

What then was it that made it possible for the torso to exist as an art form? 'The essence of the torso is that it is a monumentalizing of a preliminary design.'[2] In order, however, that the latter may assert the claims of a finished work of art, the decision on what art is and is not to portray must be taken out of the hands of those powers which previously made it, the Church, the court, the bourgeoisie, and pass to the artist himself.

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[1] H. von Einem, *op. cit.*

[2] H. von Einem, *op. cit.*

That certainly is a correct statement of a general truth. Even so the torso only attains its significance as an independent work of art as a result of the impulse, so evident in this age in other departments of artistic endeavour, the impulse to pass beyond the limits of the merely human pattern. Even though the trend is much less violent than in painting, it represents a certain retrogression from life and an attempt by the creators of the sculptured human form to emancipate themselves from nature, that is to say, from man.

In the light of all this it is easier to understand why today we have things professing to be sculptures, consisting of bits and pieces stuck together on a wire skeleton, like a reconstruction of a form that has been destroyed.

VI

CHAOS UNLEASHED

THE REVOLUTION IN PAINTING

PAINTING in the modern age is the most uninhibited of all the arts. Freed from the inevitable bondage attaching to a public task, freed from set themes on which it was compelled to concentrate, working only for itself or for the anonymity of exhibitions, it is threatened by the very fortuitousness of its own inspirations. What Karl Jaspers says about the creative artist in our age applies with supreme relevance to the painter. 'There is no clear delimitation or definition of his task such as is imposed when the artist and his work are specific parts of a greater whole (*die sichere Begrenzung durch ein Ganzes fehlt*). The world gives him no definite commission, and he must, at his own risk, commission himself. He can be certain of no clear response, or at best of a response that is false, he has no clearly defined rival or antagonist and so he ends by becoming equivocal even to himself.'[1] Moreover, there is an amorphous and chaotic element inherent in colour itself when it is no longer subject to the discipline imposed by architecture and three-dimensional logic.

The modern painter is in greater and more continuous peril than any other artist. He is cut off from reality, and his life is all too often the life of a man desperate. Marées himself feels this 'unbearable isolation'. It is true that the greatest painters of our day are profounder minds than the architects, yet in none does the demoniac element come so violently to the surface, nor must any experience so strongly the sense of being forsaken—and none is so perilously exposed to the temptations of charlatanism.

For this reason alone the state of European painting in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is incomparably more chaotic

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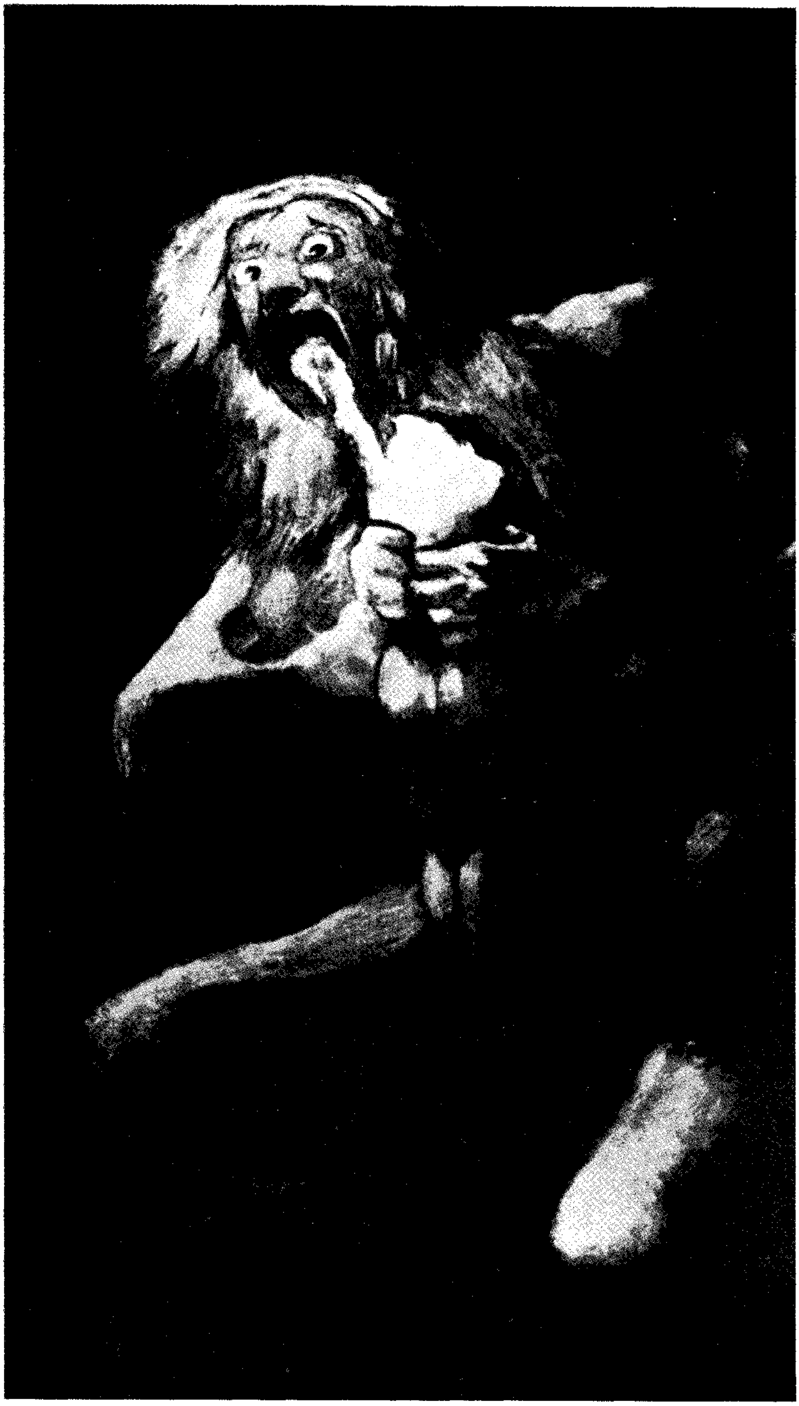
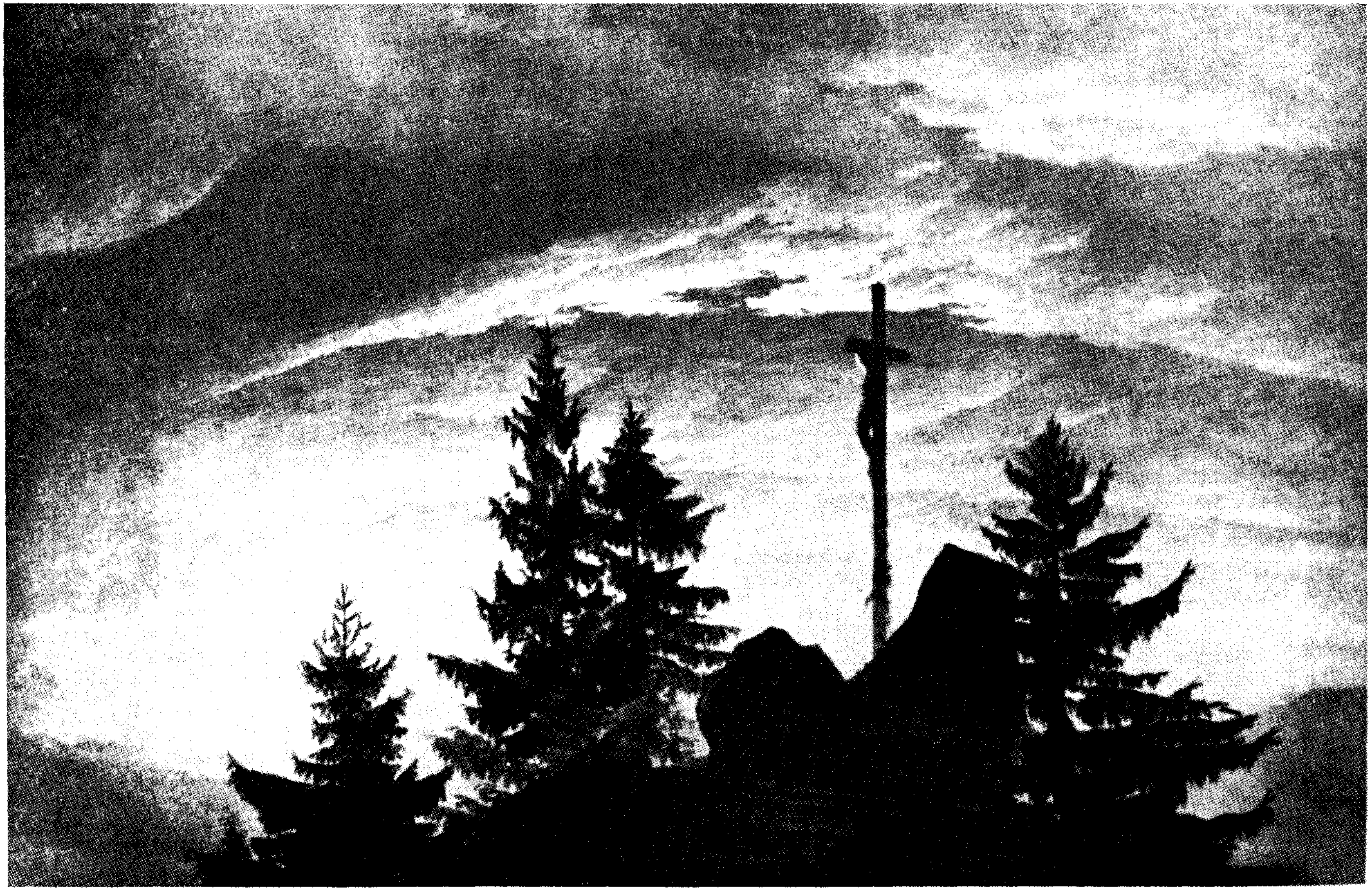
[1] Karl Jaspers, *Die geistige Situation unserer Zeit* (Berlin, 1933).



GOYA: CHRONOS DEVOURING HIS CHILDREN, *circa* 1810
A fresco formerly in Goya's country house, *Quinta del Sordo*. (*See page* 119.)



C. D. FRIEDRICH: MOUNTAIN CALVARY

Sketch for the Tetschener altarpiece 1808. 'Man feels himself abandoned by God. He is as much alone in the universe and as unrelated than the architecture of that period. And yet here too we can recognize certain unmistakable trends, which working openly or below the surface give the whole epoch its peculiar direction. Three stand out with particular clearness, a tendency to break up what was once the microcosm of the painting, a tendency to reduce painting to the two-dimensional, a tendency to represent the dreamlike and irrational. There is no doubt some deep connection between these different trends. Certainly they carry the individual painters of the century along with them. Those who seek to withstand them are simply left behind.

THE DEMONS (GOYA)

The ruined altars are inhabited by demons.—E. JÜNGER, *Blätter und Steine.*

The more we study the art of Goya the more intense grows our conviction that, like Kant in philosophy and Ledoux's architecture, he is one of the great pulverizing destructive forces that bring a new age into being. In Goya's art certain characteristics force their way to the surface, they are symptoms of what have become the decisive trends of modern painting, but there is more to him than that. Court painter though he was and officially working for the Court, even as Ledoux still worked for the *ancien régime* and dedicated his great architectural works to two monarchs, Goya nevertheless is the embodiment of the new type of the 'exposed' artist in the sense outlined above. The new element in his art has no connection with the public sphere, but derives from a completely subjective province of experience, from the dream.

For the first time an artist, taking refuge neither in disguise nor pretext, gives visible form to the irrational. The two series '*Sueños*' ('Dreams') and '*Disparates*' ('Madnesses') are the real keys not only to his own work but to the most essential thing in modern art. And '*Disparates*' are also the frescoes with which he decorated the walls of his country house, and not a few of his pictures.

Here for the first time an artist has thought something worthy to be put on canvas, which derives directly from the depths of the dream world and the irrational. Nothing could surely be more mistaken than to suppose that these series were created to improve or instruct the world or to brand some politician. The elemental power of these visions would never be understood in terms of so innocuous and idealistic an explanation. It was not the kingdom of ethics which gave them birth, nor can they be thought of as a species of pictographs. It is true that they speak in a kind of *idioma universal*, a language common to mankind, but there is nothing allegorical or metaphorical about them, no cryptic meanings which the beholder is expected to decipher though such meanings were of course subsequently read into them by others and also by Goya himself. It is well known that this series of drawings were given new titles when they were published; '*Sueños*' became '*Caprichos*', a class of drawing with which the public was familiar, and one which was represented in Spain by the '*Capricci*' of G. B. Tiepolo. The '*Disparates*' became '*Proverbios*' or proverbs, and the different drawings were given titles which gave them an allegorical significance. The original titles were for the most part probably unintelligible to Goya himself, and were doubtless based on associations or 'disguises' of the dream world which so often prove meaningless to the waking mind. They must, as must the dreams themselves, be psychologically interpreted, they must, that is to say, be referred, not to some general and recognized association of ideas, but to a purely individual one, which is valid for this one man alone. Baudelaire expresses this brilliantly in what he says about Goya's 'love of the incomprehensible'. This is the link with all those modern movements whose 'iconography' derives similarly not from some universal association, but from some purely individual working of the dreaming self—movements which could all be lumped together under the name 'oneirism', a name which one of them actually assumed. Psychoanalysis will one day attempt to write their 'iconography'. The general theme of these dreams, however, is the world of the monsters, of the demons, of the Infernal—Incubus and Succubus.

Once Hell was a clearly defined province of the world beyond. All the hideous products of the imagination by which the human mind could be tormented were banished into pictures of that place and were thus objectivized. The eruption of Hell into this world was a real and external thing, and it was thus that the painter would portray it in pictures of the tempting of the saints and of those dehumanized human beings that mocked and tormented Our Lord.

In the other case, however, the one here before us, this world of the monstrous had become part of man's inner world. It exists within man himself, and this brings us to a new conception of man, in so far as man himself becomes demoniac. It is not merely a matter of his outward appearance, it is that the man himself and all his world have been delivered to a demon empire. Man is on the defensive. It is Hell that has the overwhelming power and the forces that man can marshal against it are feeble and despairing.

In the visions of the '*Sueños*' and '*Proverbios*' we see every disfigurement by which man can be made hideous and every temptation by which his dignity can be assailed; we see demons in human form and beside them bewitched creatures of every kind, monstrosities, ghosts, witches, giants, beasts, lemurs and vampires. Chronos devouring his children seems like a nightmare personified as he squats, a naked giant, on the edge of an oppressed world, and yet this Pandemonium of unclean spirits has a kind of raging vitality. These are no creatures of artistic fantasy —these are bloody realities that have been personally experienced.

For what comes to light so visibly and directly in the '*Sueños*' and '*Disparates*' puts its impress in greater or less degree on all Goya's later work, affects both his choice of subjects and his treatment of them. In his famous pictures of the horrors of war he prophetically develops a conception of war that at the time was wholly new and shows us the raging of demons in human form 'brutally showing us man no longer as something made in the image of God, but as a creature whose humanity has departed from him, showing him then when he is dead, as a thing, a carcass, something men throw away'.[1] These words of Hetzer are anything but an overstatement. Goya's bull-fighting pictures, for instance, are certainly no glorification of the Spanish national sport, they are simply yet another portrayal of the cruel madness of the mob, and of men brutalized. Processions and the Inquisition are similarly treated and it is in these pictures that for the first time in human art, we see human beings as an amorphous mass. It is—most significantly—at this time that the madhouse is recognized as a fitting theme for a painter.

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[1] Th. Hetzer, 'Über das Plastische in der Malerei,' in *Festschrift für Wilhelm Pinder* (1938).

Many have recognized the demoniac element in Goya's portraits. Baudelaire says that 'his faces, thanks to that inexplicable technique which he so often employs, are something half way betwixt man and beast', and even where the outward appearance of dignity is preserved, one seems at certain points to see beyond the mask and catch the demoniac flicker behind it. Wellington's portrait is an example. More than once the very landscape acquires a monstrous character and no man so tellingly expressed the demoniac character of that new miracle, the balloon.

The peculiar means he employs are determined by his subjects, and both are equally novel. Hetzer rightly says that 'in Goya, painting—admittedly a very different kind of painting from that of the Baroque—rises up against the three-dimensional element and it is now that a warfare commences that steadily became more heated right up to the time of the Impressionists'. A sheet like the 'House with the Trees' shows how far the extrusion of the third dimension can proceed at this stage. Often the background becomes so flat and so devoid of character, that one wonders whether one is not looking at a stage backdrop—or a painted background like those used by photographers. It is a very significant fact that Goya was the first painter to use lithography and exploit its somewhat crude potentialities—his manner of working a red crayon is very much on a par with this. In his second series it is plain to see that his 'drawings' are really monochrome paintings; there is a fiery red water-colour wash—a thing extraordinary in itself and most significant—and a wild fury of line that makes for complete dissolution of form.

The date of the '*Sueños*' is 1792, when the French Revolution had reached its climax. It was at this date also that Goya had a severe illness, the nature of which we do not know. These are the decades when many artists seem to have been possessed by demoniac powers. The sculptor Messerschmidt[1] repeatedly portrays his own face as a hideous grimacing mask, while the ice-cold art of Füssli[2] shows indications of unmistakable hallucination. This is the time when Flaxman saw the devilish face which, for some inscrutable reason, he called 'The Ghost of the Flea'. It is also the age of Mesmer (1733–1815), the age when occultism was highly fashionable. It was as though a door had opened in man, a door leading down into the world of the subhuman—the world which threatens those with madness who have seen too much of it.

That Goya escaped madness is due to the fact that in the midst of the terrible visions which weighed upon his soul he could still cling to the pattern of the human form. He realizes it most perfectly in his 'Christ on the Mount of Olives', a picture in which Christ's features so strangely resemble Dostoevski, and in which He stands forth as the prototype of man in the condition of ultimate desolation and supreme spiritual need. There is a sort of secular version of this. It is that sheet from the *Desastres de la Guerra* which shows man kneeling in despair before the darkness of the void. But here there are no ministering angels.

THE DESOLATION OF MAN (C. D. FRIEDRICH)

It is not a world of demons that causes man to be desolate; nature also can do this to him. This is a truth, wholly new, which is declared to us in the pictures of Caspar David Friedrich. In the matter of form, he is admittedly no innovator. He paints deliberately after the manner of the old masters—with the same smoothness of finish as the Dutchmen of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. There is almost always some allegorical significance in his pictures, but what is really so tremendously new about him resides in a kind of hidden core of meaning, a meaning that does not immediately force itself on the beholder's attention.

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[1] Ernst Kris, 'Die Charakterköpfe der Franz Xaver Messerschmidt,' *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* (1932).

[2] For Füssli, who calls for more detailed consideration, see the monograph of Arnold Federmann (Zürich, 1927).

The nature of this last is best understood if we concentrate on its most extreme manifestation, that in which for the first time there is borne upon in pictorial form the deathly silence of the world of ice. The ship buried underneath towering masses of ice is as much a symbol of man's desolate condition as the characters of Goya's paintings with all the bloody visions that oppress their souls. Friedrich has in this case made the allegory perfectly clear, for the ship bears the name '*Hoffnung*' ('Hope').

But the keynote is loneliness. This is how man stands in the midst of nature—utterly alone. 'The solitary spark of life in the boundless kingdom of death, the lonely centre point in the region of loneliness. This picture with its two or three mysterious objects opens out before us like the apocalypse itself'—so wrote Heinrich von Kleist in 1810.

As with Goya, political allusion may be superimposed on a picture's more essential meaning, as, for instance, when the Germany of the Napoleonic wars is personified in the towering oak tree struck by lightning in the thunderstorm that has just passed over—but the general meaning of Friedrich's work arises from greater depths than this.

In the landscapes of Dutch painting, even though the plain or the sea might seem to be endless, man was nevertheless somehow at home: here he is utterly alone. An objective 'something' which used to link him to creation, links him thus no longer. What binds him now is merely a matter of feeling, the feeling of 'infinite foreboding'. A new ethos of desolation has come into being.

Man, as he appears in the older art, can feel himself desolate in the midst of nature only when God's judgement breaks in and all creation is delivered to the mercy of the elements. One of the few pictures that have really plumbed the depths of this theme is Poussin's powerful 'Winter' in his cycle of the seasons, which puts before us what might be called a personification of winter in the flood that drowns the world in its icy grey-green waters. Man's desolation here is the result of a specific catastrophe, but in Friedrich's work it is an inherent and essential condition of man's existence.

Man can indeed be moved by the omnipotence that manifests itself in nature—the eternal seas, the everlasting hills, the endless mist. These things can take hold of his soul, yet they are alien to himself and he is cut off from them and he remains in despairing solitude, and where man is surrounded by things that are in some sense human, because they are his handiwork these also are somehow charged with this tragic quality, they are symbols of homelessness—like the ship, or they are ruined—like the church—or they are dead—like the gravestones and the graves. That is why these things are the ever-recurring motifs in Friedrich's painting.

The human warmth has gone out of man's relation to created things. The moon, itself a dead body, coldly reflecting the light of a sun that has set, veiling the world in a shroud, is the chief symbol of this new feeling that man has about them. Man feels himself abandoned by God. He is as much alone in the universe and as unrelated to it, as is the crucifix in Friedrich's picture, standing in the vast impersonal silence of the mountains.

The visual equivalent, the visual symbol, one might almost say, of this divorce between man and the universe is in Friedrich's work the contrast between what is close at hand and what is in the remote distance. There is, as Herbert von Einem points out, no 'inner frame', no link between the two. 'What here seems, according to the traditional view, to be a pictorial crime, is in fact Friedrich's method of achieving that symbolic expression of himself by which he strove to transcend the limits of landscape painting of former ages. The contrast is intended to bring out as forcibly as possible that which subsists between the finite on the one hand, the thing whose nature is circumscribed by its own limits, and the illimitable and immeasurable on the other.'[1] 'When Dürer, Titian or Rubens painted a picture, the concrete and solid foreground not only formed a pictorial but a three-dimensional unity with the mountain chains and seascapes beyond. It is precisely this that distinguishes a painter like Claude Lorrain from one like Caspar David Friedrich, that in the picture of the former our own sense of touch, which has already been excited by the pillars and steps of the foreground, continues to be alert as far as the most distant horizons. But distant things in the painting of Friedrich and Turner appeal to the eye alone. They excite our longing and our unrest, whereas in the luminous world of the Baroque we somehow always feel at ease, and distant prospects tend rather to assuage, quieten and release the soul.'[1] Thrown upon their own resources, the figures, often hardly more than silhouettes, as they stand out against the vagueness and vastness of the background, move our hearts, and stir our moral and religious sense in a way that is peculiarly their own.

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[1] Herbert von Einem, *Caspar David Friedrich* (Berlin, 1938).

It is noteworthy that Friedrich's contemporaries and successors seem all to be under the spell of the elemental. Indeed, as Walter Otto points out, earth, water and ocean seem to have become something like the objects of divine worship. This note is evident in a number of paintings. The grenadier lost in the snowbound forest is no doubt, superficially, a political allegory, fundamentally however it is an allegory of man lost in a world grown cold. This aspect is often lost sight of, because people concentrate too much on the purely romantic element in the picture. Yet this peculiar feature does not end with the Romantic movement, rather does it endure, save only that the thing in the midst of which man has his being is not the unfeeling world of nature but the void.

MAN DISTORTED (THE CARICATURE)

The caricature was not unknown in previous epochs. We come across it in the late metropolitan civilization of Alexandria, where they caricatured the physically hideous. There are personal and private caricatures in the Baroque, in the work of the Caracci for instance, in that of Mitelli and Ghezzi, and also in that of Bernini. The alleged caricatures of Leonardo da Vinci are, however, as Baudelaire recognized long ago, not caricatures at all. The Middle Ages are acquainted with an art of pictorial insult, a kind of execution in effigy.

It is only from the end of the eighteenth century onwards that, starting in England, caricature became widespread and was recognizable as a clearly defined branch of art; it is not till the nineteenth century that, in the work of Daumier, it could become the main field of activity for an artist of the very first rank. It is therefore not the appearance of caricature as such that constitutes the decisive historical event, but its elevation to the rank of a respected and significant art.

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[1] Th. Hetzer, 'Über das Plastische in der Malerei', in *Festschrift für Wilhelm Pinder* (1938).

After 1830 there appeared the periodical *La Caricature*, a publication with a clear political intention. A '*Walpurgisnacht*', Paul Valéry calls it, 'a Pandemonium, a Satanic comedy, riotous to the point of debauchery. Now pure tomfoolery, now avid with the lust of blood.' These words give us an insight into caricature's spiritual paternity, its essence is a distortion of the human though it occasionally does more, it sometimes invests human nature with the attributes of Hell, for it is in the nature of Hell to create images, by which our human nature is insulted and belied.[1] This distortion may be of the most varied kind. Man, for instance, can be distorted into a mask, and it is significant that Daumier's work as a caricaturist should begin with that. The first 'real Daumiers' are the masks of 1831, a drawing with fifteen portraits carried out in the form of comic theatrical masks.

In the main, however, there are two methods which this process of distortion employs—though, of course it employs them quite unconsciously—one negative, the other positive. The negative method takes from man his dignity and his form, it shows him as ugly, misshapen, wretched and ridiculous. Man, the crown of creation, is debased and dethroned—but for all that he retains his humanity. The most harmless form of this disillusioning process is to be found in Daumier's famous series of 'Men Bathing' and 'Women Bathing'.

This is the stage where caricature makes an end of any residual glamour still attaching to classical mythology, for the degradation of men quite logically passes over to that world of ideal images which for centuries had embodied our conception of man the great, of man the beautiful, of man the godlike. The first attempts at this kind of thing, of course, date far back—to Rembrandt's 'Ganymede' in fact, while the parody of the Gods in literature began even earlier. But it is only now, in the very moment when architecture is breaking away from its subservience to antiquity, that the process asserts itself with revolutionary force. Daumier's series '*Physiognomies tragiques*' and '*Histoire ancienne*', both dating from the forties, and shortly thereafter Doré's 'Deeds of Hercules' killed the ancient gods by ridicule. Offenbach assisted the process somewhat later, and since then the Gods have never really come to life again.

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[1] Paul Valéry, *Daumier* (Paris, 1943). Cf. also Ernst Kris, 'Zur Psychologie der Karikatur', in *Imago*, Vol. XX, pp. 450–466.

The positive method of distortion makes a wholly different and subhuman creature out of man. In doing so it pulls out the same stops that have always been used by the portrayers of Hell in Western art. Man's features become a grimace, he is turned into a monstrosity, a freak, an animal, a beast, a skeleton, an apparition, an idol, a doll, a sack or an automaton. He appears ugly, a thing to excite misgiving, an unformed creature, an object grotesque and obscene. His actions assume the character of the nonsensical, the absurd, the insincere, the comic, the brutal and the demoniac.

To anyone who did not grasp the true significance of caricature, the world it portrays would seem to be a kind of Pandemonium projected into the comity of men, and indeed that description does actually fit the art when it attained its zenith and when with Goya man had begun to conceive of Hell as something residing within himself. Yet this secularized Hell now appears under a different sign than the old. It appears under the banner of the comic. This is, of course, a quality from which Goya's work is entirely free. Nobody would seek to give his visions a comic interpretation. The element of the comic, when ultimately it does begin to play its part, performs a definite function. It removes that quality which is actually oppressive to the mind without preventing the mind from being profoundly moved. Moreover, it is not the whole world that is affected by the caricaturist's distortion, merely some particular object of hostility, in particular of political hostility, or any thing or person whom the caricaturist wishes to cover with ridicule.

Anyone wishing to make an accurate analysis of the process of which the caricature is a symptom, must distinguish between what may be called the fundamental cause of the caricature's existence, and the application of this artistic form to a particular person or a particular set of circumstances between its spiritual and its practical—or let us call it its sociological significance. The primary impulse behind it is doubt or despair concerning man as such, a denial of the goodness or beauty of human nature. The conventional form of caricature is merely a pretext under which this view of man can be freely unfolded.

In Daumier's case, of course—and this distinguishes him from the much more savage and cynical caricatures of the beginning of the twentieth century—his lack of confidence in man is outweighed by a recognition of his greatness. Daumier saw the grandeur of man as did scarcely any other artist of the nineteenth century. Grandeur and absurdity are merged in him and so beget the tragi-comic.

When the beginning of the twentieth century was reached, however, that saving balance was to disappear. There was to be a new and supreme flowering of the merciless type of caricature, and one which at heart wholly despaired of man, but now the distorted picture of man that had begun with ineluctable power to take possession of the artist's mind, was to show itself without disguise in the human types produced by the art of the day, types which strike simple folk as the most terrible of caricatures and which indeed do proceed from the same dark caverns of the soul as does the caricature itself.

THE MEANINGLESSNESS OF THE WORLD (GRANDVILLE)

If we can recognize the degradation of man in these extreme forms of art, we will also recognize it in those more subdued manifestations which we can hardly call caricature at all.

With Grandville, for instance, there is a very simple device by which this degradation is achieved. It is done by seeing the world of men from the bird's-eye view, and it is astonishing to see how, as a result of this, the processes of human life can be made smaller, can be degraded and deprived of their dignity and significance.

This precarious point of view also becomes evident in the 'Realist' painting of this time. Indeed, the latter seems in a rather curious way to negate the earth, a thing that is like a faint preliminary shock of those more violent disturbances that will shortly take place in the structure of pictures. They are really anticipations of the view men will soon get from a plane.

In Grandville's work there lives on, though in an innocuous form, that other ingredient of an art that tends to translate all into the subjective, an art which first took concrete form in Goya's visions, for Grandville too had that peculiar affection for sheer unreason and nonsense. Anything can change into anything else, dead things can confuse their shapes with those of human beings and as it were draw nourishment from them, in a word, the most impossible things can be represented as happening. Thus in a drawing with the title 'Dream Transformations', a candlestick gradually changes first into a vase with a flower in it, then to a girl who holds the flower, then to a kind of phantom or figure in smoke, while on the other side the change is into a bow and quiver and finally into a fantastic bird; in another part of the picture a snake turns into a whiplash and in another direction into a branch with roses. In all this there is no allegorical meaning; the point is simply the dream quality of the transformations themselves. What we see in Grandville's work is—to quote Baudelaire—'something that can be compared to those repetitive or chronic dreams that sometimes visit our sleep'.[1] What is set forth is our experience of a certain peculiar dimension that things have on these occasions—the essential protean substance of the dream itself.

To write the thing down as the product of a peculiar imaginative mood goes to the root of the matter no more effectively than in the case of the spherical house. What is here apparent, though perhaps only faintly, is a certain phenomenon that has wide ramifications in modern art, a thing in which the rôle played by the imagination is a novel one. It is altogether a new kind of imaginative 'release', a kind of 'Absolute' imagination. As at the opposite extreme the idea was in due course to arise that the practical rationalism of the engineer could alone achieve perfection, so here the dreaming unconscious mind, though there may be no profounder meaning to its manifestations, is assumed to be capable of artistic creation. The dream has been elevated to the rank of artist.

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[1] Charles Baudelaire, *Curiosités esthétiques: Quelques caricaturistes français.*

Hereabouts lie the roots of that love of the absurd and nonsensical that is a mark of modern man, a love that is exemplified in the comic cartoon films of the twenties and particularly in the work of Walt Disney, though now the irrational element has been translated into an idiom of innocence, a fairy idiom of pure fun. Even so, there are still occasions when something with a demoniac quality comes to the surface.

In Grandville the humorous factor is completely absent, and that is natural enough, for dreams are rarely humorous. Yet although they distort the visible world to a far lesser degree, gradually so-called caricatures become more cold and inhuman than those of Daumier. No human feeling binds them any longer to man, not even hatred or contempt, while the distorted human types of Goya and Daumier appeal to human feeling very strongly indeed, they appeal to it precisely because they wound it. How accurately Baudelaire recognized the inhuman element in Grandville's art: 'He is a sickly literary brain, everlastingly intent upon a kind of unlawful cross-breeding in order thus to smuggle the creatures of his mind into the sphere of the painter's art. A philosopher or a doctor could write an illuminating psychological or even physiological study on the subject of this man. . . . With superhuman courage the man has spent his life in improving creation. He took it into his hand, turned it this way and that, ordered it in a new fashion, explained it and interpreted it. Thus nature changes to an apocalypse; he has stood the world on its head. Did he not create a picture book, whose title is *Le Monde à l'envers*? There are superficial people who find his art a subject for mirth. For my part, it terrifies me.'[1] These sentences have already begun the exposure of certain marked peculiarities of modern art.

PURE SEEING (CÉZANNE)

It has always been felt that Cézanne's painting was something of a key to the understanding of modern painting as a whole, but the real position of his art, which stands apart both from expressionism and impressionism, has only become clear as a result of the most recent research.[1]

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[1] Charles Baudelaire, *op. cit.*

This last has shown us Cézanne's painting as the final stage of a vast historical development which began with the introduction of portrayals of nature, directly observed, into the world of late medieval convention. These representations of nature are inserted into the picture bit by bit. While doing this the painter also endeavoured to establish a set of visually discernible relationships between one visible object and another.

From this point onward it is considered to be the painter's task to render on canvas that which his eye takes in, and the world of fantasy, whatever aspect of it he is called upon to render, is conceived as being essentially of the same kind as that which his eye beholds.

At a comparatively early stage an effort is made to eliminate from the representation of this visible world anything that is not actually seen but merely superadded by knowledge, anything imagined or superimposed by thought and feeling, but this last is something that really does a certain violence to our nature, for it is not by any means easy for us thus forcibly to negate our intimate familiarity with things, a familiarity which certainly does not come to us through the eye alone. Everyone knows, at any rate everyone can discover for himself, how vast an effort is required, when we are learning to draw, if we are to force ourselves not to look at things in the way that comes natural to us but to pass on to that detached contemplation of them by means of which we can produce on paper in two dimensions their 'correctly' projected image. Yet even in pictures that at first glance seem already to be quite purified of the intellectual and imaginative elements referred to above, there still lurks a great deal of pre-knowledge. It is there, for instance, in the scientific perspective that is introduced as a scaffolding into the visible picture, and there is the outline—'In nature there are no lines', Cézanne was later to say.

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[1] Fritz Novotny, *Cézanne und das Ende der Wissenschaftlichen Perspective* (Vienna, 1938).

The efforts here described set in with the late Middle Ages, make some progress here and there, grow weaker again and in the end begin on balance to gain ground. They are carried to their extreme limit in the work of Cézanne, after which it is quite impossible even to imagine any further progress in this particular direction.

The essential aim of Cézanne then is to represent what 'pure' vision can discover in the visible world, vision, that is to say, that has been cleansed of all intellectual and emotional adulteration. The setting of this aim of 'pure vision' is a matter of great significance. There is a condition which occurs in our ordinary experience that to some extent corresponds to the thing that Cézanne strives to attain, and the attaining of which he has elevated into a principle. It is that peculiar state between waking and being completely awake in which, so to speak, only the eye is awake, while the mind is still asleep. Then the world that we ordinarily know appears as a pattern of patches and shapes of various kinds, colours, sizes and 'textures'; the things with which habit has acquainted us are still behind this coloured web or tissue, waiting to come forth. This tissue is not purely two-dimensional, yet although it contains space, this is not the continuous homogeneous space of our ordinary everyday experience, but chaotic space created by the colours with which the two-dimensional colour elements are inextricably mingled. In this condition we cannot necessarily say what any one line that may emerge out of this texture 'really' signifies, nor can we say anything about light, for we can only distinguish between the effect of light upon an object and the colour inherent in a particular object where there is knowledge of objects and their colours.

The magic that pertains to this way of looking at things is that even the most ordinary scene acquires a strange and original freshness, and above all that colour released from its task of indicating and identifying objects, gains an intensity that it never previously possessed. In the moment when our daytime consciousness begins to function, this whole quality disappears and the peculiar enchantment is at an end.

Cézanne's paintings specialize in this manner of seeing things or in something very like it. They show the world of everyday things in a manner in which they seem more significant, more 'real' (endowed more intensely with 'being', if one may put it thus) than they ordinarily appear—at least they do this for anyone who has the faculty of not projecting into the picture his intellectual knowledge of the things portrayed. But precisely because he confines us wholly to the experience of the eye, he also to some extent shuts off from us the very world that the eye beholds, and makes it impossible for us really to feel our way into it.

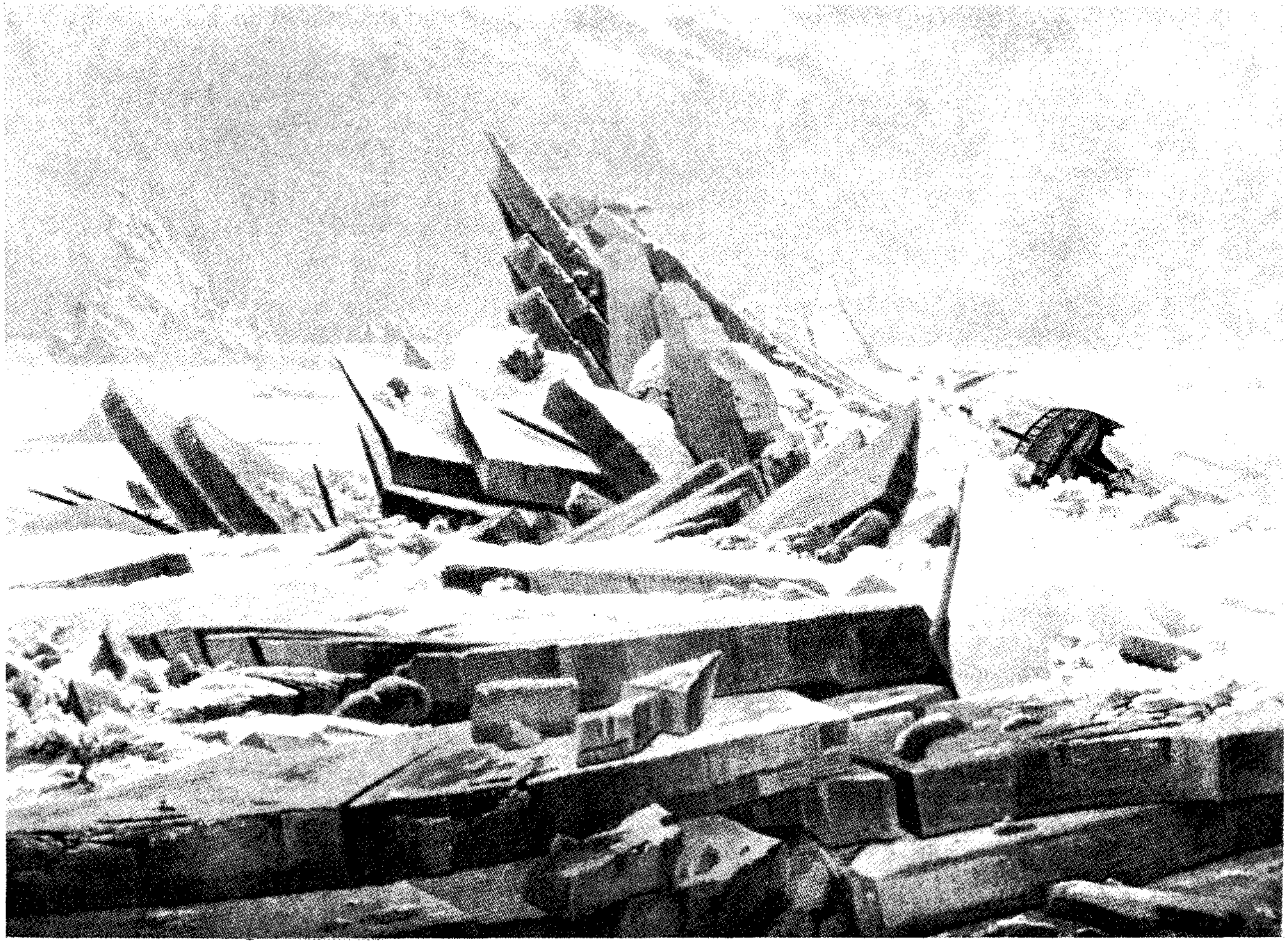
This conception of Cézanne's of the painter's task leads to a kind of painting in which mere paint enjoys a quite peculiar supremacy, a painter's painting *par excellence*, for colour, employed as it is purely two-dimensionally—the result of this self-limitation on the painter's part to 'pure seeing'—acquires a quite new and peculiar life of its own. All is built up of colour and the dynamic element that is inherent in it automatically becomes the supreme, the all-dominating thing in the picture.

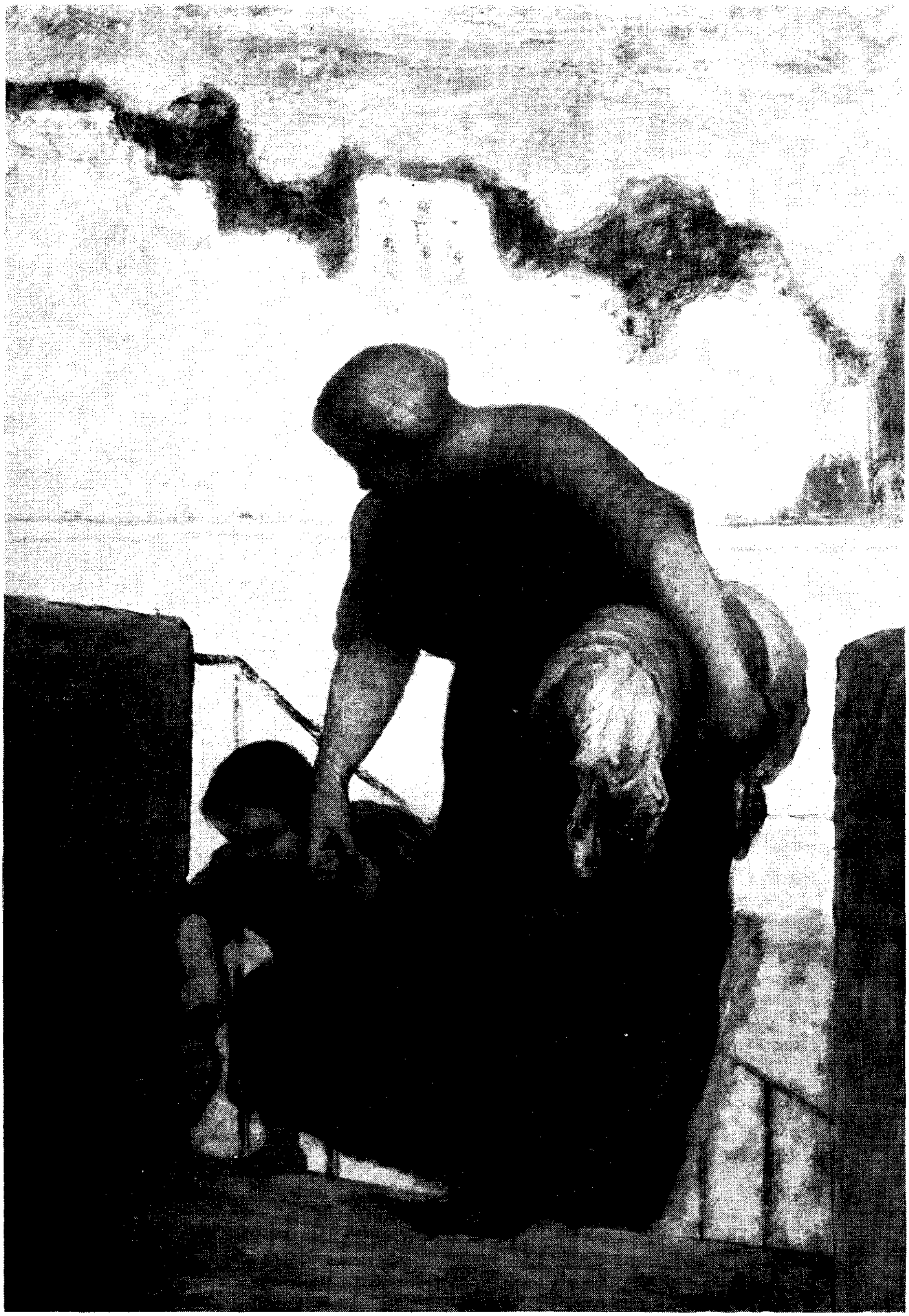
It is because Cézanne's painting is thus restricted to colour, colour as a substance and as the unique means of achieving effects, that one can indeed speak of it as painter's painting *par excellence*. It distils for us in a world-historical experiment that essential core of pure painting that, in greater or less degree, must always inhere in the true painter's art; and yet precisely because it is the distilling of an essence, it has of necessity, a volatile and evanescent quality. Cézanne's striving, one might add, had a certain affinity to that of Ledoux, who sought to extract pure geometry from its connection with plastic values.

A great many of the peculiarities of Cézanne's paintings can be explained once we have obtained this essential insight into his art. We can understand, for instance, why every trace of human feeling seems to be deliberately excluded from his portrayals of the human face; it also explains why all things that can be seen in his pictures have that essential equality of character and value, though this equality is essentially belied by our natural experience. In Cézanne an apple has the same physiognomic value as a face.

C. D. FRIEDRICH: THE WRECK OF THE *HOFFNUNG*

'For the first time there is borne in pictorial form the deathly silence of the world of ice. The ship buried underneath the towering masses of ice is a symbol of man's desolate condition. In this case the allegory is made perfectly clear for the ship bears the name *Hoffnung* — "Hope".'
(*See page* 122.)





Musée du Louvre, Paris

DAUMIER: THE WASHERWOMAN

Exhibited in the Salon of 1861. (*See page* 125.)

Then there is that strange vegetative stillness, which is not, as has sometimes been maintained, the stillness of still life, but a stillness without life, there is further—and here Cézanne presents a striking contrast to the Impressionists—the lack of any uniform lighting, and finally there is the absence of composition in the classic sense of that term, a matter which can here only be touched on and will for the moment not be exhaustively explained. All this enables us to grasp the truth, for which Novotny has furnished abundant proof, that Cézanne's pictures are really much more natural, have their face more directly set towards reality, than one's first impressions might lead one to think. Indeed, this art can never wholly divorce itself from the model supplied by nature without sacrificing its essential principle.

People have tended to look upon Impressionism as though it also were an art confined to the limits of visual perception. But a comparison with Cézanne shows that the Impressionists differ from him by holding on to at least two assumptions or 'imaginations', scientific perspective which forms the framework of their pictures, however much the colours may be broken up, and the aforesaid uniformity of lighting. As to the Expressionists, Cézanne, proceeding as he does from his own individual principle, is, as Novotny says, 'a counter-example of the art of expression (*ein Gegenbeispiel von Ausdruckskunst*).' Abstract painting which represents not the world it finds before it, but one of its own invention, may at times make use of similar means to Cézanne's, but has really nothing in common with him.

What is so unique and magnificent in the attitude from which this art is derived and what differentiates it from all the trends of art that profess to portray the visible world, is that in it the artist attains his essential sphere, not by transcending the world of common things, not by passing over it or beyond it, or even by transfiguring it, but by retiring from it, into what are, so to speak, its ultimate origins, and it is precisely here that he discovers the realm of colour *per se*. The art of Cézanne, in a word, does not discover its original element in the sphere of objects, but in a mode of conduct, an attitude.

This principle is at one and the same time something very natural and something artificial. It demands a mode of behaviour which in life can only occur under certain very exceptional conditions, *it demands a state of complete dissociation and disinterestedness on the part of the spirit and the soul from the experiences of the eye.* This makes it easy to understand Novotny's calling the art of Cézanne extra-human and divorced from life (*lebensfern*), for it is indeed contrary to human nature to exclude from the act of perception all the other functions of the human mind in favour of pure seeing.

The art of Cézanne, then, is a borderline affair. It is a kind of narrow ridge between impressionism and expressionism and in its unnatural stillness prepares for the *eruption of the extra-human.*[1]

What this leads to is that man—again contrary to all natural experience—is put on one level with all other things. Soon after Cézanne, Seurat was to represent man as though he were a wooden doll, a lay figure, or automaton, and still later, with Matisse, the human form was to have no more significance than a pattern on wallpaper, while with the Cubists man was to be degraded to the level of an engineering model.

It is at this point that the behaviour of these allegedly 'pure' painters borders on the pathological. They begin to suffer from that diseased condition whose essence is the mind's inability to project itself into the minds of others or into the world outside. When that condition obtains, everything seems dead and alien, men can then only see the outside of things, they are no longer conscious of human life in others.

It is also at this point that the whole world begins to become unstable, for when things are mere phenomena that have no meaning inherent in them, then they begin to be experienced as things without stability, things fleeting, wavering, bodiless and indetermined. They are solid things no longer (*Usnadze*). This may explain why those who wish to see a world in flux are automatically driven towards absolute painting, the painting that is innocent of any meaning whatsoever.

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[1] F. Novotny, *op. cit.*; also introduction to the volume on Cézanne in the Phaedon Verlag (Vienna, 1947).

UNFETTERED PAINTING AND CHAOS

O Mort!
Verse nous ton poison pour qu'il nous reconforte
Nous voulons, tant ce feu nous brûle le cerveau,
Plonger au fond du gouffre, enfer ou ciel, qu'importe?
Au fond de l'inconnu trouver du nouveau.—CHARLES BAUDELAIRE.

Acheronta movebo . . .—VERGIL.

The kind of painting that began about 1900 and dominated the twenties is not only contemporary with 'modern' technicized architecture, it is not only preceded, like the latter, by a kind of prelude around 1800, it has a deep connection with it and all over Europe and beyond was favoured and propagated by exactly the same groups, by those namely that were the carriers of the 'spirit of 1789'. The two things go together, despite the fact that the new architecture is so cold and objective and the new painting so wild and irrational. One reflects the other, despite the fact that painting and building have been wholly separated from each other.

For painting no longer helps to give form and character to a particular space, as the decorative fresco of *art nouveau* still attempted to do, the picture has become something belonging wholly to itself, it is no longer even a stationary patch on the wall. Rather is its character that of a book, which we open and put away again. Le Corbusier, the theorist of the new doctrines, declared that all pictures should be kept in cupboards and that they should only be hung on the walls for a few hours, as the spirit happened to move us. He found the stable picture intolerable.

This kind of painting was for long a subject of acute controversy—which makes a cool appraisal extremely difficult. Yet the verdict of its most adverse critics is not so damaging as a purely historical interpretation, for this last brings the questionable character of these efforts to light by the simple process of describing them.

The inner relationship between this kind of painting and the 'modern' building of yesterday is shown first and foremost in their common desire to dissolve the old orders. As there are now buildings in which top and bottom are no longer clearly distinguishable, so there are pictures in which top and bottom can be confused with one another. That is of course a purely external symptom, though it is an extremely eloquent one; it is moreover, something quite unprecedented in the history of painting, unprecedented even in its most daring aberrations and it is an indication of the extra-human, inhuman character of this form of art. In saying this we have really come into possession of the key to the understanding of modernist art in all its phases, for these only really differ in the means employed.

All the new ways of looking at the world which this modernist art brings in its train are fundamentally extra-human even in an outward and superficial sense. The photography of the twenties, for instance, is marked by its tendency to avoid the 'normal' view of human personality, and falls back on a few mechanical formulæ. It favours pictures taken from above or below and from unusual angles, lighting effects that break up the subject, and distortions as in a distorting mirror. In doing this it merely goes along with the essentially extra-human trend in painting which gives clear expression to its spiritual attitude. Every art of course in greater or less degree takes the world that it finds and departs after its own fashion from our normal experience thereof in order thus to create it anew, but modernistic art is driven by an ungovernable urge to pass beyond the limits of the 'merely human'.

This explains why the normal themes of pictures of the mid-nineteenth century take on a kind of *in extremis* aspect in which man appears to surrender his essential humanity and begins to see things as a man sees them in delirium or in a nightmare, under the influence of drugs or under that of incipient madness or extreme terror, and these 'states on the edge of madness' produce visions of the most astonishing kind. The visible world, the world of actual forms in portraiture, landscape, still life and every other kind of painting, even in what is still alleged to be religious art, becomes alien, distorted and horrible. The nature of its ordering becomes unstable and resolves itself into fragments; form disintegrates, becomes fluid and chaotic. In some cases man and his world are transformed by the rigidity of death; familiar things become strange and living nature becomes *nature morte*.

It has been said of Greek art that it was harnessed between two mighty powers which were perpetually at its side and with which it ever had to strive throughout the whole of its existence in order to assert itself at all. These two powers were chaos and death.[1] The new painting, in its maniac desire to shake off the fetters of the merely human, has admitted these powers into art—and with them a third, which the Greeks did not know, and which it was left to the Middle Ages to bring into our lives. That power is Hell. All these, chaos, death and Hell, are antitypes of humanity. The representation of a world which these three powers have distorted is the essential matter in the new painting.

The proximity of art to death and its kinship to the atmosphere of death, the atmosphere that makes all things cold and rigid, is something not without precedent in the history of art, something that is only superficially formulated by the terms 'Romantic' and 'Romantic Movement'. When this phase occurs an exalted nocturnal view of life, of nature and antiquity breaks out of the depths of man's being—but through it all man's dignity has been preserved. The proximity of death in the German romantic movement, as it is experienced in Gilly, in Beethoven, Kleist, Hölderlin, Novalis, Runge and Friedrich, is tragic, but it is human. In his surrender in art to the now unapproachable sum of things man asserts his law against chaos which for him is a reality that he knows all too well.

In the modern phase, however, there is combined with the consciousness of death (which in a thousand forms lurks behind all living things, which makes its awful presence known in a faded flower, in an empty room—yes, even in a still life) there comes a torturing doubt as to the dignity and the very nature of man. That doubt may resolve itself into an agonized acceptance of negation or turn to a positive and cynical distortion of his being. Here the proximity of death is no longer tragic, it is something infernal, it is an affirmation of chaos, and it is all the more terrible because there is no province of life that is entirely immune to this eruption of the nether world.

Once Hell was a clearly circumscribed domain that stood in contrast to a universe that had meaning and reason. But by an almost similar aberration as that which, in the nineteenth century, caused men to see the gleam of Heaven in the 'natural light' which shone down upon all things, so that even a load of hay was transfigured by it, an aberration that caused that very light to be dissipated and devalued—there now erupt into reality the most terrifying visions from the antechambers of Hell and from all the circles thereof. The coming of these visions was a thing unknown to those who conjured it, but they come for all that, nothing is immune to their influence.[1] Whatever belongs to horror and to night, to disease, death and decay, whatever is crass, obscene and perverse, whatever is mechanical and a denial of the spirit—all these modes, motifs and aspects of the inhuman take hold of man and of his familiar world. They make of man a ruin, an automaton, a mask, a phantom. He sinks to the level of a louse, an insect. In the various movements of modern painting it is always one or the other of these various anti-human attributes that is underlined. Cubism lays the emphasis on deadness, Expressionism on boiling chaos, Surrealism on the cold demonism of the last icy regions of Hell. Even if the actual works had been lost, the very titles chosen for the pictures by the men who painted them would be sufficient to betray their spiritual home—'Fear', 'Sick City', 'Dying City', 'Moribundus', 'Mon Portrait Squelettisé', 'Plague Above, Plague Below, Plague Everywhere', 'The Joke has conquered Suffering', 'The Dunghill', 'Back Into Nothing'.

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[1] Ludwig Curtius, 'Antike Kunst', in *Handbuch der Kunstwissenshaft.*

The interpretation here adopted may at first sight seem fantastic. Yet, if we look at the matter objectively, we will find that it does just what a theory ought to do, it explains a multiplicity of data which we have till now had to try and understand one at a time, it allows us to recognize all the various 'isms', from Futurism to Surrealism—they are all in one way or another a flight from the higher reality—as expressions (which only differ from one another on the surface) of the same basic powers, for although human nature in all its manifestations is always essentially one, its denials are many. Such a theory, in a word, allows us to see through all the differences, including the minutiæ of technique, a technique which often displays superb means in the representation of these unrealities. Incidentally such a theory also explains the instinctive repugnance which the ordinary 'natural' man tends to experience towards these pictures; there are profound reasons for that feeling, nor can it be idly dismissed as the contempt of Philistine ignorance for anything that is new or out of the ordinary.

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[1] H. Schwarz, 'Säkularisation der Hölle', in *Wort und Wahrheit* (1947), Vol. II, pp. 663 ff.

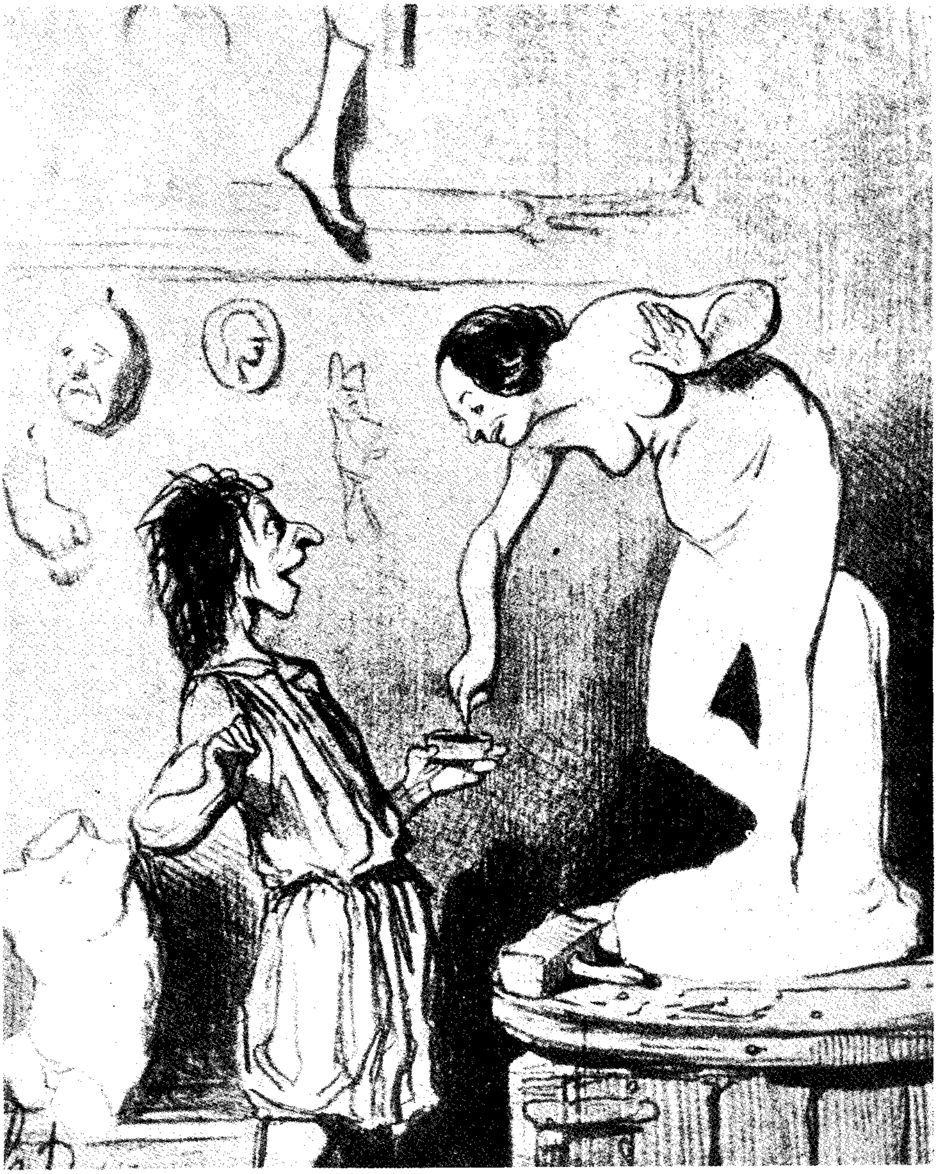
For there is, to speak in purely æsthetic terms, a genuine art of the horrible and the infernal, nor is this most dangerous artistic potentiality by any means to be denied. It has lurked behind Nordic art from its very beginnings, for it was Nordic art that produced the image of Christ disfigured in death, a thing unknown to the art of Eastern Christianity, as it also produced the picture of Hell. Bosch, Bruegel and Grünewald raised this art of the horrible to the same level that it attained in its most transfigured and exalted forms, while Goya widened its scope without for a moment deserting the province of true art at all—and indeed we find on the threshold of this new art of inward death and Hell a number of artists whose genuine artistic power cannot possibly be denied; Ensor, Munch, Kubin, Schiele are examples.

One cannot travel very far along this road without tumbling headlong right out of the realm of anything worthy of the name of art, but wherever it still can keep its feet upon the ground this art of Lucifer is not without its glories. Its great triumph is that it can still create formal order and beauty out of the dissolution of the human body, of nature and the world, and indeed whoever emerges unscathed from this experience of the abyss may well be fitted to create an apocalypse of Heaven and Hell—a true *De Profundis*.

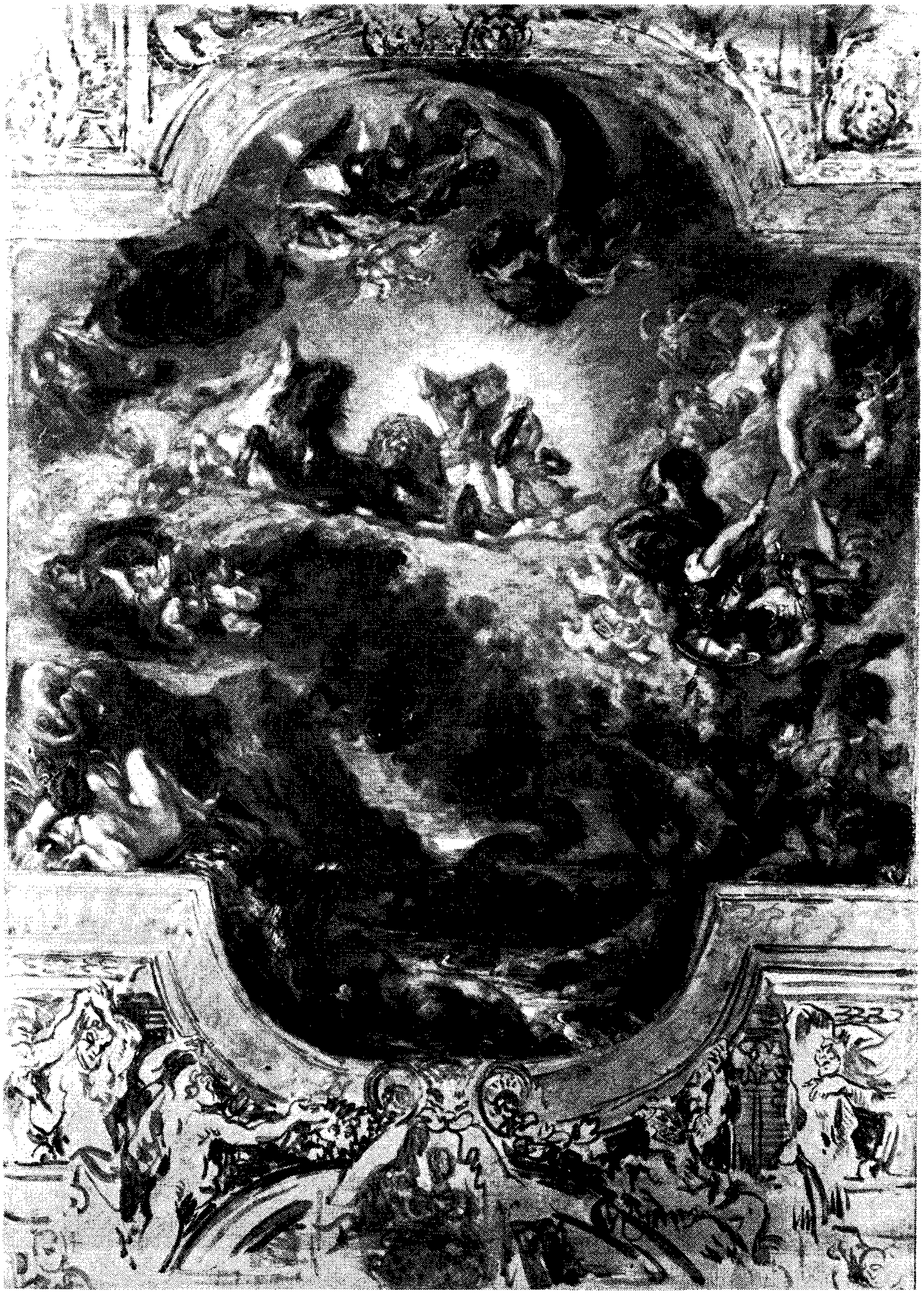
For all that, a great part of the new painting, particularly that of the twenties, is no longer art at all any more than a great part of the new building is any longer architecture. To those, moreover, who were driven by an irresistible inner urge to hold fast in their pictures this new nocturnal aspect of life—and many of these men took grave personal harm from so doing—there succeeded a class of persons of a very different type, for there began to grow up a vested interest in horror, a thing which till then had lacked all precedent. It is now that we begin to encounter the fevered quest for novelty at any price, it is now that we see insincere and superficial cynicism and deliberate conscious bluff; we meet, in a word, the calculated exploitation of this art as a means of destroying all order. The mercenary swindle multiplies a hundredfold, as does the deceit of men themselves deceived and the brazen self-portraiture of vileness.

It is rare for this new infernalism to proceed by any explicit programme, for the most part it works unconsciously, but even at its height this new school of painting needed an ideology to disguise its true nature, for without that the public would never have borne with it, nor would it have borne with itself. Much as 'modernist' architecture, in order to put its abstract phantasies across, made a great show of being objective and practical, so the new painting dons a multiplicity of ideological masks. It is only in its final cynical Surrealist phase that these are wholly abandoned. Elsewhere it pleads the urge to expression, the 'unfettering of the imagination', and the opening up of so-called 'new territory'; it promises us the man of the future and praises the allegedly 'aboriginal'. It professes to set high value on the picture-making of children, of the untrained and even of the mentally deficient, and does its utmost to obliterate the boundary between genuine art and such infantile productions, which are, of course, not art at all. If today, even for those who are ardently seeking to re-establish them, the boundaries of art have become blurred, it is the practitioners of the new art who are to blame—and whoever cannot see through the profound humanity behind all these trends, has no right to set himself up as a defender of human values.

Like modern architecture, the trend in question was for a time no more than a subterranean trickle, and the rejection of the true picture of man was relatively gradual, but the signs of the change are to be found in the choice of such subjects as 'Circus Folk', 'Jugglers', 'Harlequin', 'Refugees', etc.—all of which are really allegories that in one way or another cast a doubt on the true



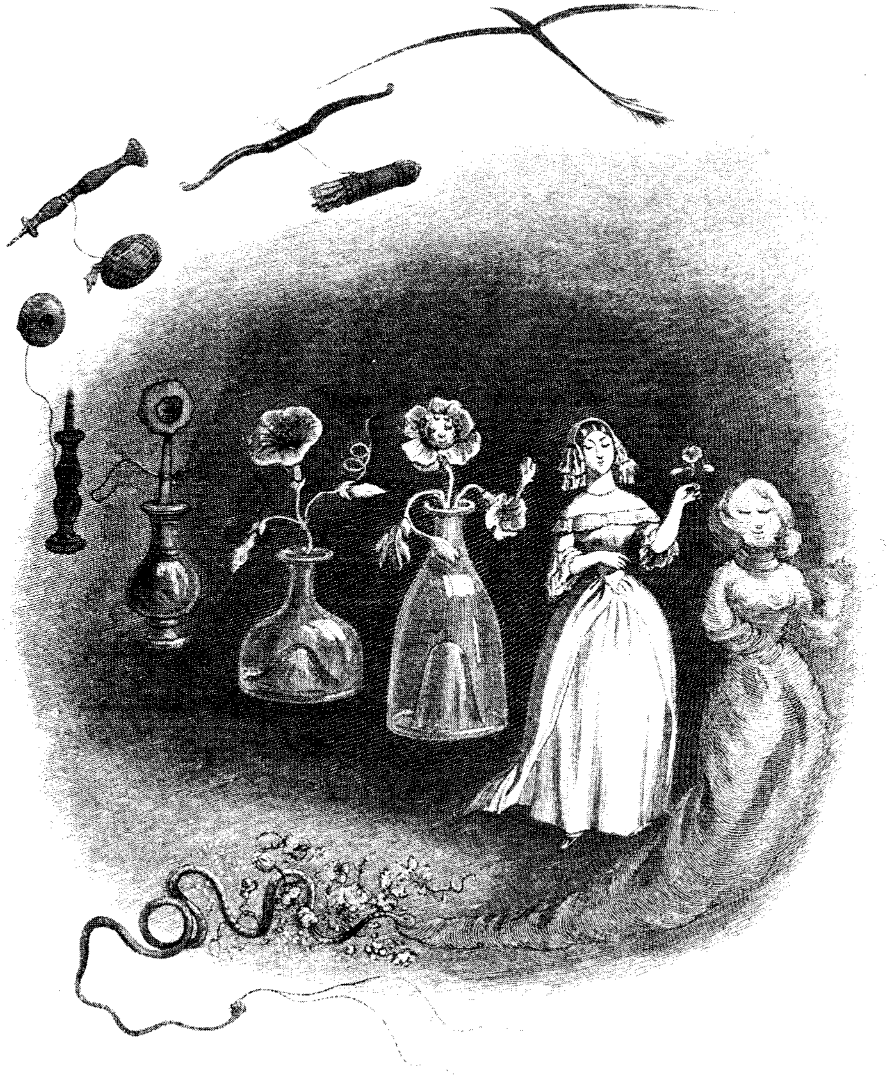
DAUMIER: PYGMALION
From the series *Histoire ancienne*
'This is the stage where caricature makes an end of any residual glamour still attaching to classical mythology; the ancient gods are killed by ridicule.' (*See page* 125.)



Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique

DELACROIX: SKETCH FOR THE CEILING OF THE GALERIE D'APOLLON IN THE LOUVRE, 1849

'The more mature works of Delacroix sought and recaptured the link with the Baroque.'
(*See page* 39.)

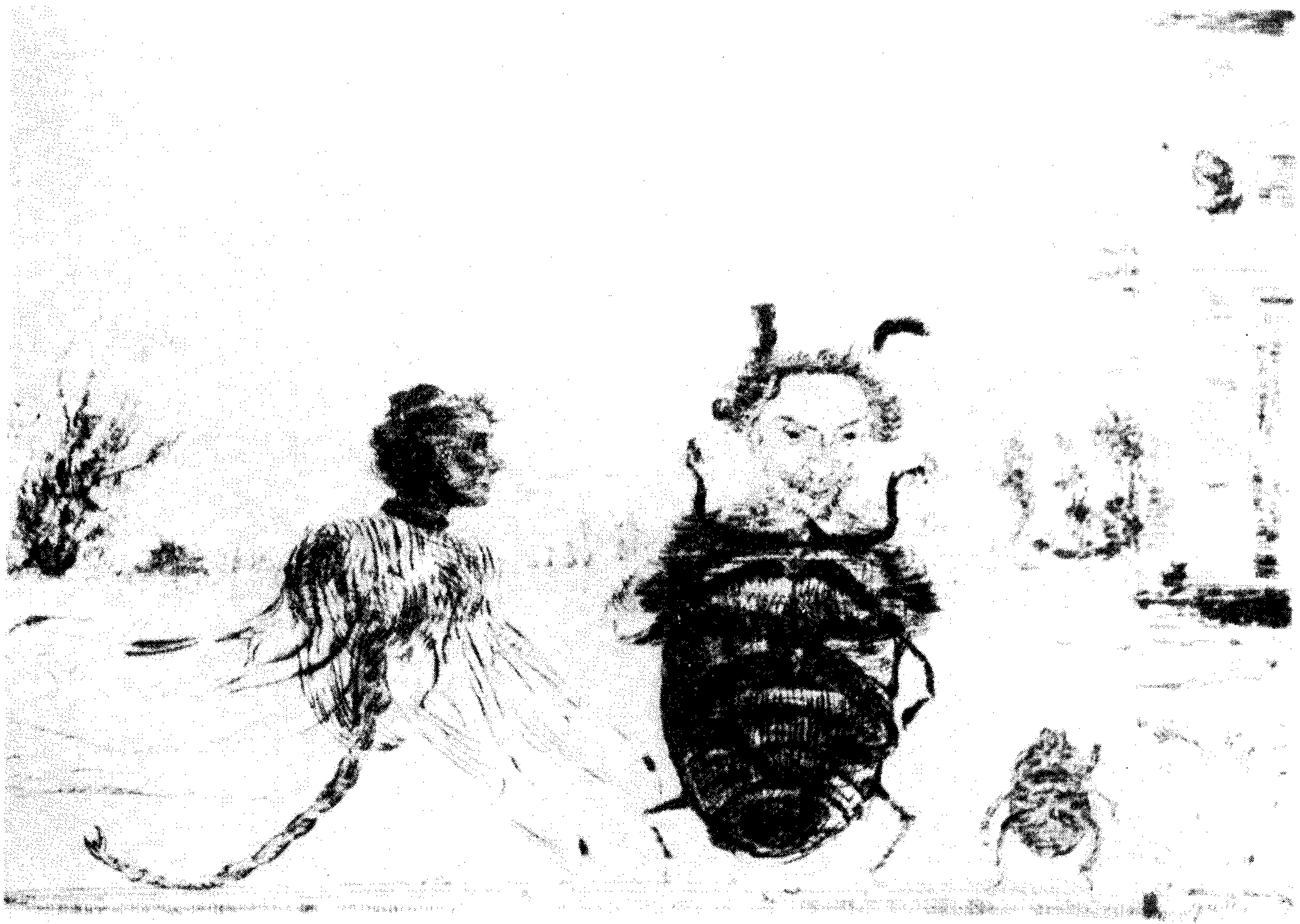


GRANDVILLE: DREAM TRANSFORMATIONS

'In Grandville's work is something that can be compared to those repetitive and chronic dreams that sometimes visit our sleep.' *Charles Baudelaire.* (*See page* 128.)

ENSOR:
INSECT FAMILY

A self-portrait of Ensor is included. The sub-human invades man and his private world. (*See page* 138.)



nature of man. Van Gogh, Munch, Seurat, all born around 1860, are the first painters in which the new thing is apparent, though they have not yet completely surrendered to it. It is only in Ensor, also born in 1860, that it becomes all-pervading.[1] For those born after 1860 it becomes their destiny. Long before the First World War it revealed the nightmare that was riding Europe in its great cities.[2] After the war a definite artistic decline set in, and it is now that the symptoms of extreme degeneration come into evidence. With the 'new objectivity' the most dead and banal form is attained. Regarded politically this newest and latest art is the ally of anarchy, psychologically it is the expression of an enormous fear and of a hatred of the human race which men turned against their own persons. The most profound explanation of the artistic abortions which now came into the world phenomena had already been given by Goya, who wrote under the title page of his *Sueños*, '*El sueño de la razon produce monstruos*'—'When reason dreams, monsters are born.'

THE CHAOS OF TOTAL DECAY

Why does man love passionately both destruction and chaos?—DOSTOEVSKI.

The ultimate conclusions from the premises of the nineteenth century were drawn by that movement of the twenties of the present century which assumed the often misunderstood name of Surrealism.[3] It is a movement that unites a number of the basic tendencies of modern art—the love of the illogical, the receptivity for the chaotic, faithfulness in representation together with an icy coldness of finish. These are the things that impart to it that peculiar quality of vehemence.

Surrealism seeks its inspiration in the automatism of the subconscious, in dreams, and even on the borderlands of madness.

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[1] On Ensor, compare the most illuminating study by W. Fraenger in *Graphischen Künsten* (1926), pp. 81 ff.—Illustrations in Paul Fierens, *James Ensor* (Paris, 1929).

[2] See E. Jünger, 'Die Staubdämonen', in *Blätter und Steine* (2nd edition, Hamburg, 1941)—an interpretation of A. Kubin's work.

[3] H. Schwarz, 'Über Sous- und Surrealismus oder Breton und Plotin', in *Wort und Wahrheit* (1948), Vol. II. B. Champigneulle, *L'Inquiétude dans l'art d'aujourd'hui* (Paris, 1939), pp. 60 ff.

This is of course not entirely new. Similar trends are already to be found in the Romantics; Goethe, for whom the Surrealists have such profound contempt, had already grasped this. 'There is a demonic quality in poetry, and especially in the unconscious kind, in which reason is utterly at a discount and which has precisely this effect on conceptual thought.' All that Surrealism stands for is of course the polar opposite of Goethe's world.

The leading theme of Surrealism is chaos absolute, the movement seizes upon it wherever it can be found—in the dark regions of the world of dreams, in hallucination, in the 'deranged' and irrational character of ordinary life, in that department of reality in which things that have no intrinsic connection with one another have been brought together in a fortuitous, senseless and fragmentary manner, be it in the confusion of a great city or in that of total war or in that of a junk-shop—the junk-shop's 'treasures' seem to fill the Surrealists with quite peculiar enthusiasm. Their subject-matter may be loosely defined as the 'chaos of total decay', not the chaos of creative potentialities, but that of finality, not the chaos of things coming to birth, but that of things finished and done with, not the chaos of fruitful nature, but that of the unnatural—a chaos 'from which the very spirit of God Himself could hardly create a worthy world' (Goethe).

These 'discoveries' are for the Surrealist not the raw material which he can fashion creatively into a new form, all he desires is to hold them fast with all their 'peculiarities' much as in the nineteenth century the Positivists of painting aimed simply to transfer a piece of ordinary life on to canvas. 'Above all, no thought of art, no thought of form or structure' (how, proceeding from premises and contrary to their implicit principles, art does manage to come into being is a chapter in itself). Salvador Dali, the spokesman of Surrealism, declares that painting is the 'coloured instantaneous photography of concrete irrationality' (a euphemism for chaos). Such painting, though it may actually derive entirely from the subconscious, is represented as having the same degree of reality as that of the normal world—as indeed in hallucination it actually has—for here it has all the tangibility and plasticity of the real. By means of an almost exaggerated polish the same deathly coldness is imparted to the representation of these irrationalities as Caspar David Friedrich attained in his endeavour to make lifelessness actual before our eyes.

The basic feeling tone that lies behind these pictures and that is inspired by them, is that of fear, the fear which grows upon us in those emptinesses of space that seem to suck the soul dry and lurks in the terrifying quality of the *motifs* themselves. The atmosphere is that of nightmare and narcosis—of loathing and terror.

Surrealism has thrown off the mask. Openly and without shame it pours its insults upon God and man, upon the living and the dead, upon beauty and morals, upon form, reason and art. 'Art is a stupidity'. Openly it confesses the omnipotence of lust, giving its allegiance to a permanent revolt, to monstrosity and to the scandalous. It claims to have attained to a point of view from which 'life and death, the real and the imagined, top and bottom are no longer experienced as contradictory opposites'. This would-be scientific definition is nothing less than a definition of chaos.

Nor does Surrealism deny this. It openly confesses that it seeks 'the systematization of confusion' (Dali). 'A new vice has been born,' it proclaims, 'and a new form of madness given to man: Surrealism, the child of raving and darkness' (Aragon). Words can hardly be plainer—but there are still those who will not hear them.

Utterances such as the above do not by any means relate merely to the actual production of Surrealism (which even Surrealists themselves disdain to designate as art). Surrealism implies the transformation of the whole of life. It aspires to be an all-embracing power, it exalts chaos into a principle, it strives for 'chaoticism'.

The appearance of its *avant-garde* is the unmistakable sign that the powers of the irrational—the sub-rational, let us rather say—are on the move. The men who open the gates to them are those naïf, or sometimes those allegedly complicated characters who wrongly deduce from the name of Surrealism—it should really be called Sous-realism—a promise that they will be exalted above the world of everyday things; as though there were not a world *below* that of everyday things.

There is no gainsaying the movement's power. Of all the trends of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, apart from the new building, only two contrived to survive the Second World War—positive realism in painting and this same Sous-realism. There are already Surrealist cells in many countries—and not in European countries alone. Compared with it, Expressionism represents an altogether negligible minority.

No purpose is served by belittling such a phenomenon, nor should one comfort oneself with the pretence that such things are mere extravagances, follies or forms of some strange spiritual game. Even as early as 1860 Dostoevski prophetically recognized in his *People of the Abyss* that such types as those which Surrealism has brought to full flower had inevitably to come into being—'given the circumstances in which our society has developed'—and in the last resort Surrealism only represents the final acceleration in the downward rush of man and art, that downward rush of which Nietzsche was already aware when in 1881 he wrote the fragment *Der tolle Mensch*:

'Are we not continually falling?—backwards, sideways and in all directions? *Do top and bottom still remain?* Are we not wandering through infinite nothingness? Is not the breath of empty space in our faces? Has it not grown colder?'

Part Two

DIAGNOSIS AND PROGRESS OF THE DISEASE

With the ultimate fruits of the progress of his creative activity modern man arrives at the negation of his own image.—N. BERDYAEV.

. . . no central point is any longer given to which we may look.—GOETHE.

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VII

'ANALOGIA MORBI'

WE have been considering certain symptoms that have manifested themselves in the most varied departments of art: the relations of these symptoms with one another will not always be immediately clear, but there is no reason why we should not—more or less at random—lump them all together.

Now each of these groups of symptoms casts a curious and suggestive light on a certain analogous state of affairs and certain analogous tendencies outside the purely artistic field. It would be well to review the matter from that angle, though such review must necessarily be cursory and haphazard.

We can, then, observe the following trends:

1. The establishment of 'pure' spheres in art (purism, isolation).
2. The progressive driving asunder of opposites (polarization).
3. A progressive hankering after the inorganic.
4. Detachment from the solid earth.
5. A tendency to be attracted by the lower rather than the higher.
6. A tendency to give an inferior status to man.
7. The abolition of the distinction between top and bottom.

1. Let us first deal with the tendency towards the establishment of these inhumanly pure spheres, *e.g.* pure architecture, pure drawing, pure painting, a tendency that determines not only the relation of the arts towards each other but also that between art and the provinces that lie outside it and a great deal more besides. Thus we have pure art, pure science and, as will be evident later, 'pure' religion. Incidentally, such 'purist' proclivities are also

discernible in the treatment of the monuments of ancient art; the attempts to abstract and restore a 'pure' style have contributed enormously to the destruction of everything in their content that had come into being naturally and organically.

The process of fission in the arts has its parallel in man, who now begins to split off his very senses from each other, as in the 'pure seeing' of Cézanne, and our intellectual life seems to be similarly affected. In science the process of fission is continued, the different departments of knowledge becoming sharply separated from each other and ceasing to have any common point of reference, while production is similarly broken down into a series of operations, each completely distinct from the next, so that the significance of each in relation to the whole is lost. Specialization is everywhere.

2. Everywhere there is in evidence a tendency towards the extreme, a polarizing trend. 'One is struck by the fact', says Theodor Hetzer, 'that since the French Revolution there has been a tendency to offset opposites to the point of total irreconcilability.'[1] In modern architecture art strives to the topmost limit of rationality, while modern painting inclines towards an absolute of the irrational. Buildings today divide themselves off from nature with a crystalline sharpness and dissociate themselves from their environment as never before. As against this, they also open themselves to that environment as never before. The two extremes effect a paradoxical juncture through the invention of the glass wall. Extremest heat coexists with the extremest cold, the cold of abstract geometrical design, next to a furnace of colour.

Feeling and reason, reason and instinct, heart and head, body and soul, soul and spirit, all these are torn apart from one another and are declared to be in mutual enmity. The desire to unite them and to keep them thus united, is, like all moderation as such, decried as a manifestation of the lukewarm. Indeed the polarizing trend affects our whole moral make-up.

'Never perhaps', says Ivanov, 'did man combine such readiness for self-denial, such eagerness to accept, probe and observe

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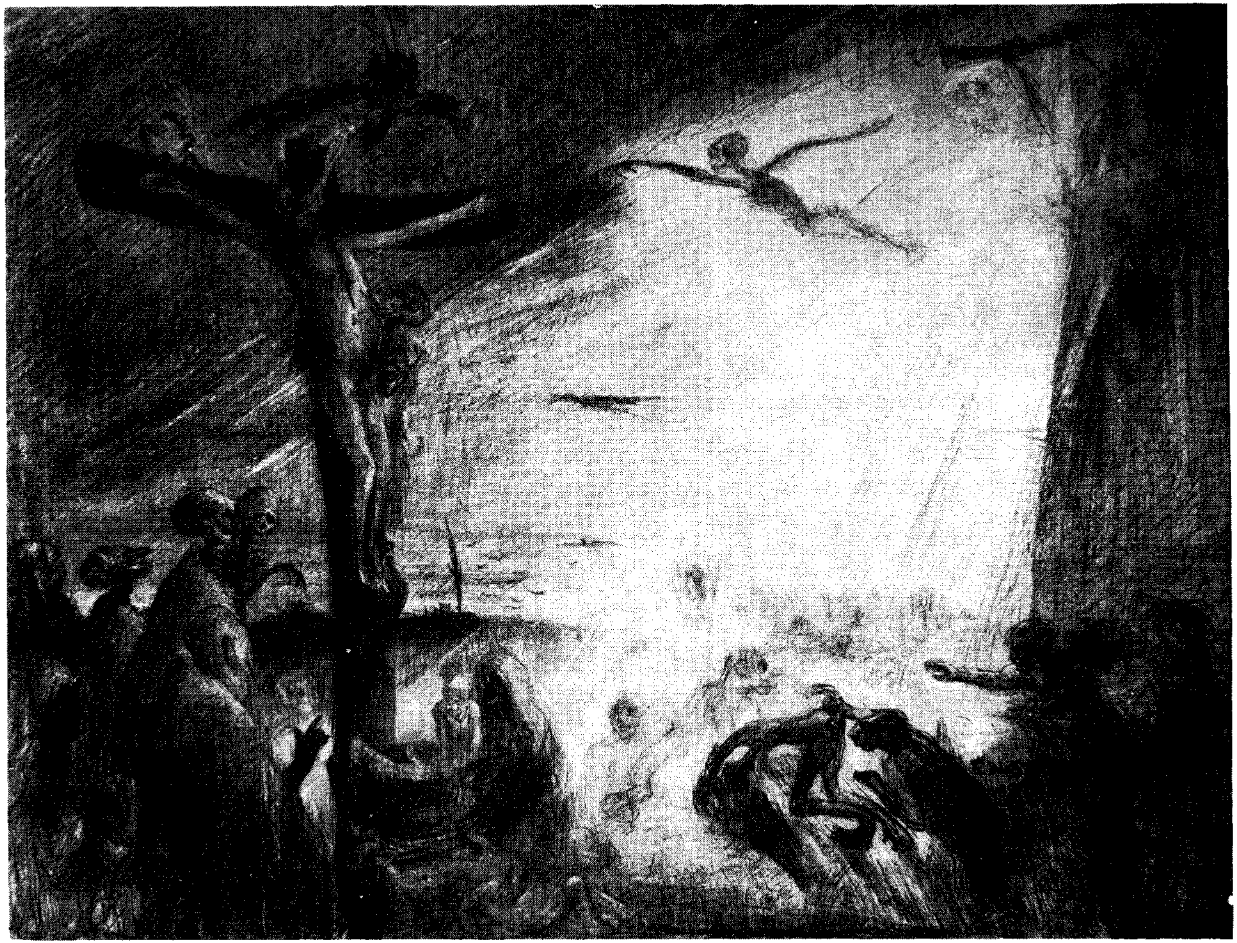
[1] Th. Hetzer, 'Vom Plastischen in der Malerei', in *Festschrift für Wilhelm Pinder* (1938).

ENSOR: CHRIST IN AGONY, 1888

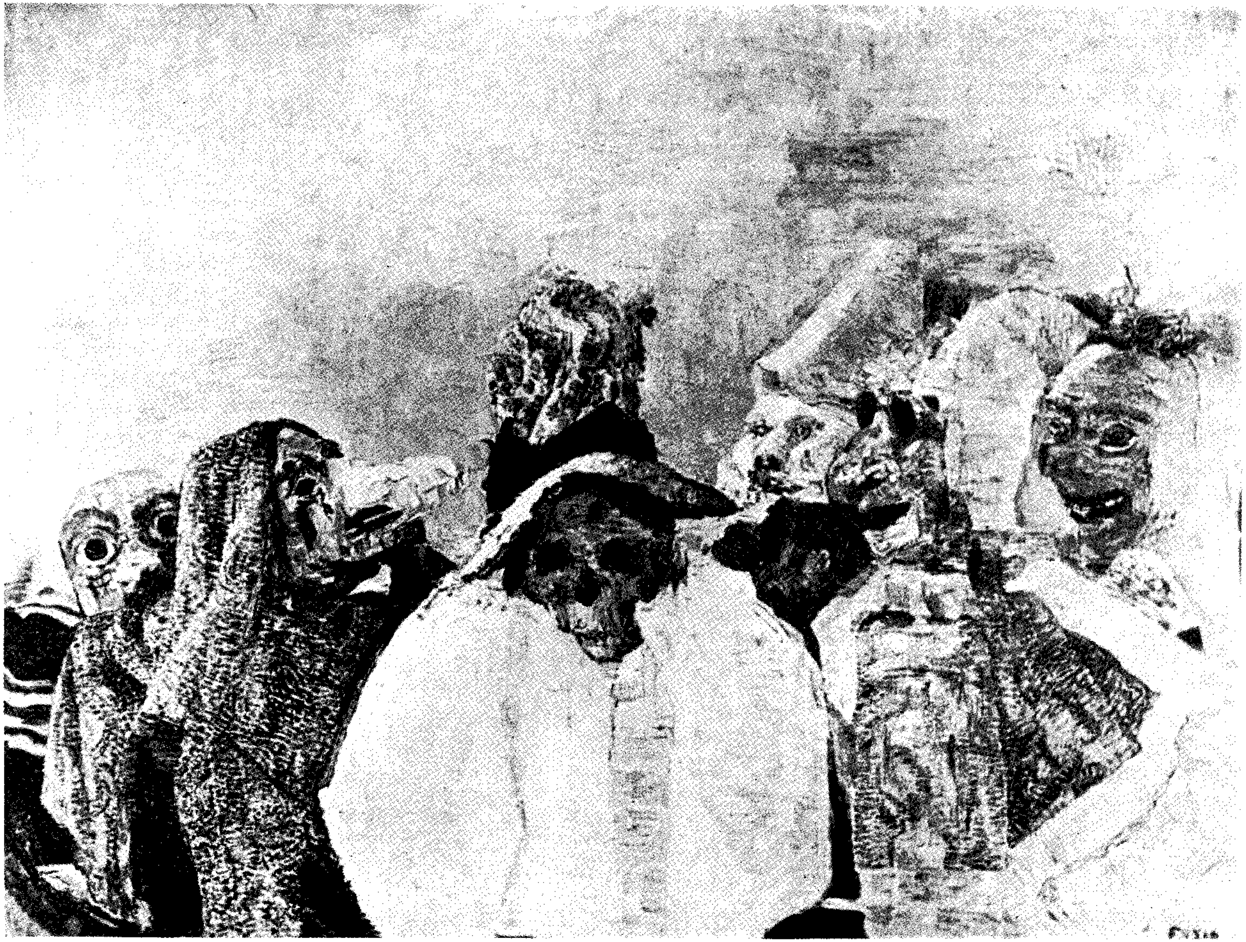
Even the death of God incarnate is haunted by ape-like fiends.
(*See page* 138.)



Musée Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique

ENSOR: MASKS CONFRONTING DEATH, 1888

'There is combined with the consciousness of death which in a thousand forms lurks behind all living things a torturing doubt as to the dignity and the very nature of man.'
(*See page* 137.)



all that comes his way with so much spiritual lassitude, so much mistrust and so much indifference.'[1]

This same phenomenon of polarization drives man forcibly both into the future and into the past: Futurism and Historicism combine to split the experience of the immediate present asunder. The greatest sacrifices are brought to this cult of the future and of the past. To conserve everything and throw everything away and start afresh—these are the mutually exclusive orders of the day and both are equally inimical to life.

Extreme individualism and extreme collectivisim contrive in equal measure to put both personality and community into dissolution. We are thus faced with the distressing choice between anarchy and the uniform. Yet everywhere the drift towards extremes gains ground. Moderation is at a discount and is accounted as backwardness or Laodiceanism.

3. A hankering for the inorganic seems everywhere strikingly in evidence. It appears in the field of art and far beyond it, and its most superb expression is to be found in the new synthetic substances which replace organic by inorganic materials. No other age could have dreamed, as did Baudelaire, of iron gardens. Mallet-Stevens' concrete trees are, of course, nothing more than a repulsive jest—yet they are a symbol, for no other age would have hit upon the thought.

The 'increasing petrifaction of life' (Jünger)—or better said, its increasing metallization—is in tune with its increasing decomposition. The century that has achieved a mastery over the inorganic elements such as was never achieved before is completely helpless when it has to deal with what is genuinely organic. It destroys and ravages the latter wherever it finds it.

4. The detachment from the solid earth which so strikingly manifests itself in architecture and painting has its counterpart in certain developments outside these fields.

In the course of that same century in which Ledoux constructed his spherical house, the sphere of the first balloon ascended into the air, and as in the second architectural revolution the detachment from the earth basis becomes more marked, the aeroplane becomes a reality. Entire buildings are now detached from the ground on which they stand and transferred to museums.

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[1] V. Ivanov, *Klüfte* (Berlin, Skythen-Verlag).

This condition of detachment from the earth which the conception of a spherical building illuminates as with a lightning flash is also manifested elsewhere—in the realm of speech, for instance: 'We are threatened with the danger of becoming divorced from the mother-earth of language', says Ivanov. 'Speech and earth are one, and a work of poetry grows out of the earth. It cannot raise its roots into the air.'[1] Yet there now come into being the rootless languages of artifice—Esperanto, Ido, and Volapuk.

This same condition of 'earthlessness' has prevailed everywhere since 1770. Its most alarming manifestation is the 'flight from the land', a thing that has admittedly also appeared in other epochs.

5. Our age, like our art, is powerfully attracted towards the unconscious, towards the dark and the sinister, the primitive and the archetype and towards all that pertains to the submerged part of the soul.

This means that the artist becomes convinced that the true domain of poetic and artistic creation begins 'where reason only hesitantly dares to tread', and the purport of this doctrine for life in general is this: that the unconscious provides us with something more true, more profound and more original than is vouchsafed by our conscious mental life, for that life is subject to the censorship of our reason and tends to be purely pragmatically determined. It may even imply something more radical, namely, that dreams alone 'grant man all his rights of freedom' (this from the programme of the Surrealist Revolution). Hence comes the yearning to lose one's consciousness in dreams, in intoxication, in the baser forms of ecstasy or in some kind of substitute for any of these three.

We thus have two parallel and almost contradictory phenomena. On the one hand the peculiar attraction to the inorganic which characterizes these two centuries producing a great flowering of those sciences that deal with lifeless things; physics, chemistry, and astronomy progress at a great rate, so much so that the biological, spiritual and humanistic sciences have difficulty in keeping pace with them; indeed, the latter are somewhat dominated by the former and tend on occasion to take over a point of view more suited to the study of the inorganic than to their own field. As against this, and in a sense counterbalancing it, we have a marked urge towards the study of the unconscious—and also of the primeval. It is the time when depth psychology registers its greatest achievement, as does research into primitive life and art, into prehuman and prehistoric life, and into the early history of our planet. In these fields there are now some truly great discoveries. As in art, so in our knowledge of man, research is drawn towards the domains below the level of full life to the territory that lies beneath our full humanity and our waking existence. The popularity of the exploration of the innermost parts of the earth and the depths of the sea are something like a vague or partial symbol of the current direction of men's minds. '*L'intelligence—quelle petite chose à la surface de nous même*', says Barrès. That thought is an excellent example of this new quality in our feeling about life, this quality that turns our spirit towards 'the nether abyss'.

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[1] Ivanov, *op. cit.*

6. At first the degradation of man in art took somewhat crude forms. It also appears, more or less disguised, under many forms in other provinces. Its most horrible manifestations appeared in the twentieth century and are seemingly not yet at an end.

In the field of theory it takes the form of identifying man wholly with his animal nature. Man is defined by such writers as Spengler and Nietzsche as a beast of prey, or elsewhere as an animal that is sick. It appears again in certain schools of psychopathology which insist that the real core of his being lies in his lower nature. 'Modern psychology of the unconscious', says Nicholas Berdyaev, 'has discovered a dark cellar-hole in man and professes to have laid bare the essentially base character of even the noblest kind of suffering. In doing so, it has debased man and trodden him into the mire.'[1] Even the thinking of ordinary men, however, today likes to see the springs of all human action in the sexual, economic or political fields.

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[1] Nicholas Berdyaev, *Von der Bestimmung der Menschen* (Bern–Leipzig, 1935).

It is no mere chance that at the beginning of the twentieth century the spotlight of research is turned on to those sides of human nature and of the human story which call in question the whole nature of man, and by dwelling on those borderlands where it merges into the pre-human and extra-human cause it to appear as something alien to our traditional conception. Thus we have special attention paid to the psychology of primitives and children, of lunatics and criminals, the psychology of dreams and intoxication, mass psychology, and the psychology of apes.

There is a certain seeming compensation for this degradation of man in a prevalence of a supposedly high, though purely theoretical, estimation of his value. An elaborate system of safeguarding his welfare has come into being, but in so far as this is entirely confined to the satisfaction of his bodily needs, it indirectly implies his further debasement.

7. Both in building and in painting, the large number of forms which can be stood upon their head is evidence that the feeling of difference between top and bottom is tending to disappear. This actually appears to be one of the main points of the Surrealist programme. Moreover, it is illuminating to observe that this tendency extends far beyond the realm of mere art. For instance, modern depth psychologies have developed a conception of normal man, according to which an aberration in an upward direction cannot be distinguished from a downward aberration. The modern use of the word 'irrational'—a particularly fashionable piece of semantic coinage—implies a complete obliteration of the difference between the sub-rational and the super-rational. This abolition of fundamental distinction tends naturally to make for chaos.

THE LOSS OF THE MEAN

If we group all these symptoms together and examine them carefully we arrive at a diagnosis which we might well characterize as loss of the mean, or loss of centre.

Art has become centrifugal. This is true of the tasks and problems of art as a whole, as it is true of the relation of the different arts between themselves, for here sculpture has wholly lost its mediating function. It is true of the ideas and subjects for which art shows so marked a preference. Art has in a very definite sense become eccentric. Man seeks to get away from art which should be the mediating element between senses and spirit, and art itself struggles to escape from art in which it has as little satisfaction as man now finds in man. Art strives away from man and from all that pertains to man and measure.

Yet all these symptoms are a symbolic expression of analogous tendencies in mankind as a whole, nor is it in art alone that man is striving away from the mean, away from men—though it is precisely this tendency that modern art illuminates with such quite exceptional clarity.

THE FLIGHT FROM HUMANISM

The picture of the ideal man disappeared from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.—N. BERDYAEV.

The diagnosis which we have been able to make on the basis of the symptoms here collated comes very close to that made before the outbreak of the First World War by certain Russian writers. Ivanov, and even more so Berdyaev, have detected in the forms of modern life and modern art the expression of a profound anti-humanism.

'Art, which is a kind of anticipatory record of the inward processes of life, can obviously no longer find any fruitful fields within the limits of humanism. Advancing arbitrarily into any territory that lay immediately before them, these nomads of beauty have failed to observe that they have left the kingdom of humanism behind them, and Heaven alone knows whither they are bound.

'Thus Scriabin's breach with the whole musical past was that of a contemporary genius with humanism in music. . . . Thus also in painting, Picasso overcomes the human element within himself through the destruction of its original subjective centre. His creative spirit flies from out its human lodging as the raven flew out of the ark. It wanders around, pecking at the remains of a drowned world, the rags of what had once been the veil of Isis, the dead husks of a world whose ordered semblance lies in ruins. . . . And so humanism dies.'[1]

This general analysis must be modified in two particulars. The dehumanizing process began, not at the commencement of the twentieth century, but at the end of the eighteenth, and it was directed consciously or unconsciously, not against the humanist ideal of man in the narrower sense of the term, but against man himself. The process is very clearly mirrored in the art of the time and particularly in the attitude taken by it towards the art of the past.

We may distinguish three phases. In the first of these (from 1760 to 1800) man's gaze reverts to primal periods of art and culture—particularly in the case of architecture—to phases which had hitherto lain beyond the horizon of historical memory. This return to human origins brings into being an entirely new view of antiquity. Men begin to show particular interest in those of its features which antedate civilization, they deliberately select its barbaric elements and delight in their rough and sinister grandeur and in that quality of ponderous earnest that seems to characterize them. For the first time men revert to the Doric in Greek art, a phase that was so strange and distasteful to Goethe when he encountered it at Paestum, and one that the whole of Western art had till then ignored. Then there is a further reversion to the Etruscan—or to what passed for Etruscan—to the Egyptian, to the ancient Nordic, to cairns and barrows. Structures made from Cyclopean masonry begin to exercise a peculiar fascination on the mind and, for the first time since the days of the Romanesque, we get truly grandiose conceptions of subterranean architecture. People here and there even begin to be aware of the art of the primitives; this being, so to speak, an aspect of the barbaric.

Even Goethe falls under the spell, as is shown in the following passage: 'Art has a formative quality long before it begins to be beautiful, and yet even then it is true great art, more true and more great indeed than when beauty has been attained; for there is a creative nature in man which becomes active as soon as his life is secure. As soon as a man is free from fear and from material care, this demiurge within him can use this tranquillity to make his impress on things and then man looks about him for material into which he can breathe his spirit. And so the savage now decks out his coconut or his own body with fantastic features and hideous shapes and bright colours, and though this image-making may produce the most arbitrary forms and figures and may be without true formal proportions in its parts, it will nevertheless have artistic unity and a consonance with itself' (*sie wird ohne Gestaltverhältnis zusammenstimmen*) 'for it has had its origin in a single unity of feeling and it is this that has made it into a characteristic whole.'[1]

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[1] V. Ivanov, *op. cit.*

As against this the mid-nineteenth century was marked by the attempt to neutralize the effects of these somewhat disturbing experiences and to seek refuge in epochs that were truly humanistic, such as the Hellenic, the Gothic and the Renaissance. To the early nineteenth century 'Classicism' meant something wholly different from what it meant to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the latter case it was a live and forward-moving thing, in the former it is reactionary and even inhibitory, at best it is a form of 'escapism'. It was, in fact, an attempted retreat into the security and stability of humanist values, an attempt to recapture the substance, as it were from the outside, by turning backward and taking hold of the forms.

In the third phase, which in point of time synchronizes with the second revolution, there is an affection for the barbaric *per se*. The moderns now discover negro art and the art of primitive peoples in general. Interest in the great cultures is now in direct ratio to their barbaric or archaic content. Hence the affection, among others, for the ancient Mexican. Hence also the enthusiasm for prehistoric art up to the old Stone Age. Meanwhile in Western art the barbaric and demoniac elements of the Romanesque and certain forms of late Gothic begin again to appeal to the imagination of men. It is all of a piece with this that people should now be fascinated by the art of children, of amateurs and of lunatics, by all that province of alleged art, in fact, where the human spirit is not wholly human any longer but is on the borderland of the prehuman and the extra-human.

[1] Goethe, *Von deutscher Baukunst* (1773).

AWAY FROM MAN

Yet these anti-humanist tendencies are themselves only the first hesitant steps upon the road which leads away not only from the gentleness and excellence of humanist culture[1] but from man himself. Berdyaev in his book *The Meaning of History* has devoted an entire chapter to what he calls the dissolution of the image of man. 'It is', he writes, 'characteristic of all these movements that the human form should be shattered to pieces and utterly dismembered, and indeed we have a sort of ending to man as an entity.

'In Futurism man has completely ceased to be the leading theme of art, indeed in futurist art there are literally no more human beings, for man has been torn into tatters. All the real things in the world leave the places that are proper to them, and objects such as lamps, sofas, streets begin to penetrate the human form, so that man and his incomparable personality are no longer entities at all. Man collapses into the surrounding world of objects.

'In Picasso we can see complete human form crumbling and being dismembered, we can watch its dissolution into its allegedly constituent parts, the object being to probe into the depths and seek the basic shapes out of which man is put together. Picasso's art breaks both with the patterns of nature and with those of antiquity. It no longer seeks the complete human being at all, it has lost the faculty of seeing things as wholes. It tears off one cover after another in order to lay bare the structure of nature and in doing so penetrates ever further into the depths, disclosing while doing so the images of things truly monstrous, which admittedly Picasso creates with undeniable expressiveness and power. One can fairly say that all the futurist movements, which are far less important things than Picasso's painting, advance the process of dissolution ever further. When one sees pieces of paper or newspaper advertisements worked into a painting, or when one recognizes there the contents of a garbage pail, then it is obvious that this process of dissolution is to have no limits set to it whatever and that what is taking place is a process of dehumanization.

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[1] The German is 'from the all too human of humanism'. A reference to a well-known phrase of Nietzsche.—*Translator.*

The final fruits of man's creative effort are the negation of his own image.'

The same trend is commented on by Ortega y Gasset, who, in his book on the task of our time, heads a whole chapter with the title, 'The Dehumanization of Art'. 'If one seeks a general descriptive formula for the latest products of art,' he writes, 'one instinctively seizes on the divorce between art and humanity. The painter no longer turns to reality, he turns against it. He has quite deliberately resolved to shatter and dehumanize the human image.'

So we see that our diagnosis is by no means new. It is, moreover, further confirmed by the undeniable fact that modern art finds no difficulty in portrayal of the demoniac and of man himself turned demoniac, but finds insuperable difficulty in showing us man as a human being, and fails utterly when it comes to the God-man and the saint. '*Devant l'homme l'artiste moderne se trouble*', says Champigneulle.[1] Elsewhere he writes, 'The inability of modern painting to give a picture of man that is either faithful or profound corresponds to the increasing obscurity that surrounds the conception of man.' Attempts consciously to overcome this weakness and to show man as a spiritual being seem doomed to fail. '*L'influx spirituel au lieu d'émaner du modèle parait surajouté par le peintre.*' The 'spirituality' that is deliberately put into the work is felt to be a thing applied from the outside. 'I reproach the masters of the latest painting with the fact that they do not understand the dignity of the human face—or do not wish to understand it.' ' "Love's first success", says Pascal, "is that it inspires great respect." Modern painting shows no sign of any respect for man.'[2] One might remark that it shows as little respect for animals and flowers, for these too seem to become the victims of a demoniac enchantment.

This is a state of affairs that has grown up gradually. It is only gradually that the capital of the humanist tradition has been consumed. The demoniac transfiguration of man is something that can be observed as far back as the beginning of the century—

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[1] B. Champigneulle, *L'inquiétude dans l'art d'aujourd'hui* (Paris, 1939).

[2] B. Champigneulle, *op. cit.*

particularly in the highest achievements of portraiture, and it is possible that the sinister background, before which man stands as he once stood before a background of light, imparts to them a quality of depth which was lacking in the portraiture of the eighteenth century, for since the eighties of the nineteenth century the void has been spreading out increasingly around man and within him.

With the beginning of the twentieth century, however, those movements appear which, as we have seen, have neither the desire nor the ability to give a true picture of man at all; and as the ability to make a human portrayal of the human face declines, so that of creating things that lie outside of nature and man attains undreamed-of peaks of horror.

The anti-human tendencies are clearly reflected in the consciousness of the age and are discernible in the actual utterances of many artists since the time of crisis in 1770. These utterances need not necessarily be taken at their face value. As symptoms, however, they should by no means be disregarded.

In them the impatience with man expresses itself in two typical forms. One is a Lucifer-like longing to transcend the merely human, a desire on the part of certain men to destroy the human element both in art and in themselves. Thus we have a super-humanism, an urge towards the superman—and towards a super art.

At the other extreme we find despair and a tendency to take a low and cynical view of man, we find a hatred for all that transcends the world—a hatred in fact for man, for nature and for art, all of which are felt to be 'anthropomorphic fetters' from which escape is sought not by transcending man but by destroying him (Romantic Nihilism). 'Surrealism', says Champigneulle, 'flies from this earthly life not into a world beyond but into something that is of this world. It rejects the supernatural, it hates anything on principle that has a religious character, it takes refuge in the *sub*-natural in infra-humanism.'[1]

Here are a few examples—their number is infinite—of these frantic outcries, full either of longing or of hatred and despair.

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[1] B. Champigneulle, *op. cit.*

'Quite early in life I began to feel that man was hideous' (Franz Marc). 'Man is one of nature's experimental failures' (Barlach). 'Man is a beast' (G. Grosz). They are all variants of Nietzsche's 'human, all too human'.

Now, however, nature is drawn in to share with man a common denigration. 'Quite early in life I began to feel that man was ugly, beasts seemed far more lovely to me. Yet even in the beast I found so much that was ugly and repulsive, that an inner urge instinctively caused my representations to be more and more schematic and abstract. The trees, the flowers and the earth showed every year more and more of their ugly and repulsive sides, until suddenly I became fully conscious of the ugliness and uncleanness of nature' (Franz Marc). This must be the first time in the whole history of art that a painter actually speaks of the ugliness of nature.

A similar thought is expressed in yet more brutal fashion by Guillaume Apollinaire: 'All too many painters still worship the plants, the stars, water or man. The time has come to prove that we are the masters.' It is at this time that men began to speak of 'driving both man and nature out of art'.[1] Even Füssli, however, had already cried out in 1778, 'To the Devil with nature. Nature makes me lose my temper.'

War is declared, not only on man and nature, but on light, on the intellect and on composition. The attraction that is exercised on the artist by the extra-human and the extra-natural by darkness, unreality and the subconscious, by chaos and nothingness has about it all the qualities of an enchantment. 'To practise unrealities—the highest thing there is' ('*Unwirklichkeiten üben—das höchste*') (Corinth). 'Our beating heart drives ever deeper towards the ultimate ground of things' ('*zum Urgrund*') (Klee).

There appears a new conception both of nature and of art. 'There is only something that is not quite nature, but is rather the overcoming and interpretation of nature. That something is art. It is in the nature of art that it should always have consisted and should still consist in the most daring removal of oneself away from nature and the natural.' 'We no longer cling to the picture of nature but destroy it in order that we may show forth the mighty laws which are at work behind the appearance of beauty. By doing this art becomes the bridge to the spirit kingdom, it becomes the necromancy of man' (Marc).

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[1] B. Champigneulle, *op. cit.*

After dissatisfaction with man and nature, comes dissatisfaction with art which may be said to liquidate itself, when artists no longer desire to be artists. 'Surrealism', says Champignuelle, 'corresponds to a condition of inner revolt, of doubt, of denial. Artists deny art and painters painting.'[1] One might add that architects also deny architecture, but we can spare ourselves further quotations. One need only read the proclamations of the Futurist, Dadaist and Surrealist revolutions. The '*Viva la muerte*' of the Spanish revolutionaries might well be the battle-cry of modern art in this its despairing and suicidal phase.

All these different ways, conscious and unconscious, in which the artist expresses his dissatisfaction with man, whether it be through his work or in spoken or written confessions, are merely a compellingly eloquent symptom of the general dissatisfaction with man experienced by man himself, a feeling for which Nietzsche coined a phrase for the century that followed him: '*Der Mensch ist etwas was überwunden werden muss*', which may be freely translated: 'Man is a bad habit that must be overcome.'

DESCENT TO THE INORGANIC

The phenomena of art show the direction in which this tendency 'to draw away from man' is leading us, and they show us this in as glaring a light as they show us everything else. We have but to glance at modern building to note a thing of some importance, we find that it is growing increasingly colder. It is almost as though men were spellbound by the quality of hardness and coldness in his choice of materials. All that domain of man's life with which building is concerned tends to become metallic. In many of the movements of modern painting moreover, particularly among the cubists and constructivists, the feeling for the lifeless, the cold, the inorganic, amorphous and mechanical, is stressed to its uttermost limits. And yet what we see in modern art is merely here to be taken as an index of analogous tendencies in other departments of life, for there is without any doubt a shift in process whereby human life and the human spirit and the main activities of man have tended to be drawn more and more towards the vast kingdom of the inorganic.

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[1] B. Champigneulle, *op. cit.*

The term 'inorganic' must here be understood to have a much wider signification than that which relates to the lifeless things in nature, though these in a sense provide the starting-point of this movement—a movement that is literally the begetter of a new world. It is as though man had suddenly developed new organs and new faculties of perception which in a most wondrous way placed him *en rapport* with the very nature of dead matter and so helped to establish his empire over it. The amorphous elements and entities of nature, metal, air, fire and electricity, begin suddenly to draw the human spirit towards them as by a magnet, and this too is a trend that has taken on visible form in the productions of modern art.[1] It is this mysterious *rapport* which is the foundation of all those triumphs won by the sciences dealing with inanimate nature, those masterworks of the modern spirit—here is the basis of the achievements of nuclear and cosmic physics. Here lies the origin of the applied science of modern technics, here is the force which together with modern capitalism and certain specific tendencies to value work for work's sake has begotten modern industry and the type of the modern industrial worker. Hence, too, derives the man subordinated to that inorganic empire which in the end makes him increasingly amorphous and inorganic himself—makes the servant of his own creation, the machine, a thing that could only have been brought into being by a spirit devoted to the inorganic with every fibre of its being.

And yet this conception of the inorganic may still have been too narrowly defined, for it must be taken as including the whole of that vast kingdom of things that are dead. Perhaps indeed it is only now that we can speak of anything that is really dead at all in the absolute sense of that term, for in all the earlier stages of history there has always been some kind of life, even in death.

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[1] F. Novotny, 'Über das "Elementare" in der Kunstgeschichte', in *Der Plan* (1946), pp. 174 ff.

All this applies among other things to the past which today we tend also to experience as wholly dead and as a thing utterly withered away. 'The field of history was like that wide field that was full of dead men's bones, and lo, they were utterly dry and withered.' (J. Georg Hamann.)

The museum that preserves for us the inanimated fragments of the past is, as we have seen, a thing full of significance in this context, a sort of symbol of the deadness of things gone by, and Ernst Jünger has rightly stressed the connection of this phenomenon with the machine age in which we live.

The mental characteristics which mark this turn towards the inorganic in man are clear and pronounced. We have a new kind of mental precision with rigid mathematical reasoning as its instrument, we have the search for laws and formulæ and the organs of microscopy and macroscopy specially developed for this view of life—here too there is a lost centre. Man's attitude becomes one of dispassionate and detached observation and is characterized by a growing lack of sensibility. There are the qualities that open to him this very special kind of world and it is by means of them that within that world he can assert and maintain himself even as he transforms it. As to the past, to which no living tradition binds him any longer, he preserves it as he might preserve any other lifeless object and seeks to understand it from the outside.

The objective and subjective aspects of this great change cannot really be separated. Indeed, what is here defined as inorganic, and what we mean by the words 'rational' and 'rationalist', what we refer to in one context as 'deadness' and in another as 'insensibility' can only really be grasped if we continually refer the one set of qualities to the other.

Men have before this seen one partial aspect or the other of this basic phenomenon, this mysterious enchantment that the inorganic seems to effect over our minds, and they have all too often mistaken the part for the whole, they have seized on some secondary aspect of the basic malady and treated it as the essential 'cause' of the world's disorders. But materialism, mechanization, totalitarianism, bureaucracy, rationalism, intellectualism are merely the somewhat nebulous definitions of some partial aspect of the change that has taken place in the inward and outward condition of man, and the all too glib employment of these terms tends to give us a disastrously limited and one-sided view. For instance, when we speak of materialism as the nineteenth-century's spiritual motive power, it becomes fatally easy to overlook the fact that the habit already noted of approaching the study of history as though one were paying a visit to a museum is a symptom like any other of a single great spiritual malady. If we speak of a mechanistic view of the world, it is fatally easy to ignore the truth that there is a dynamic or energetic view of the world which equally derives from a stressing of the inorganic, that even the physical view of the world has a mysterious point of contact with the metaphysical one, though both are equally divorced from both the spiritual and the organic.

Now there can be no doubt that this attainment by the realm of the inorganic to a position of primacy over the human mind betokens a disturbance in the condition of man. We might possibly be tempted to interpret this tendency to break away from man in a positive sense. We might see it as a kind of transhumanism, an urge driving us towards a higher humanity, but it is precisely here that we come to a dead end, for such is the nature of man that his place is of necessity within the organic and the spiritual world. He has no true part in the inorganic world at all, for that world is essentially extra-human. A shift, therefore, of the incidence of spiritual and mental activities towards the inorganic must inevitably be a negative thing. It makes him less and not more than a human being.

It will hardly be difficult to get most people to agree with such a view. Most of the conceptions of the nature of reality, at least most of the effective conceptions, be they scientific or philosophical, postulate the existence of a world built up in three or more stages, one leading to the other, the domain of the inorganic leading to that of life, and that of life to that of the spirit. This is true, even if some of these conceptions seek to reduce the higher stage to the level of the lower and Christianity further conceives of a world of creatures both above nature and below it. However we look at it, man has his place in the marginal territory between the realms of organic life to which he belongs with his body and the world of the spirit to which he belongs with his soul.

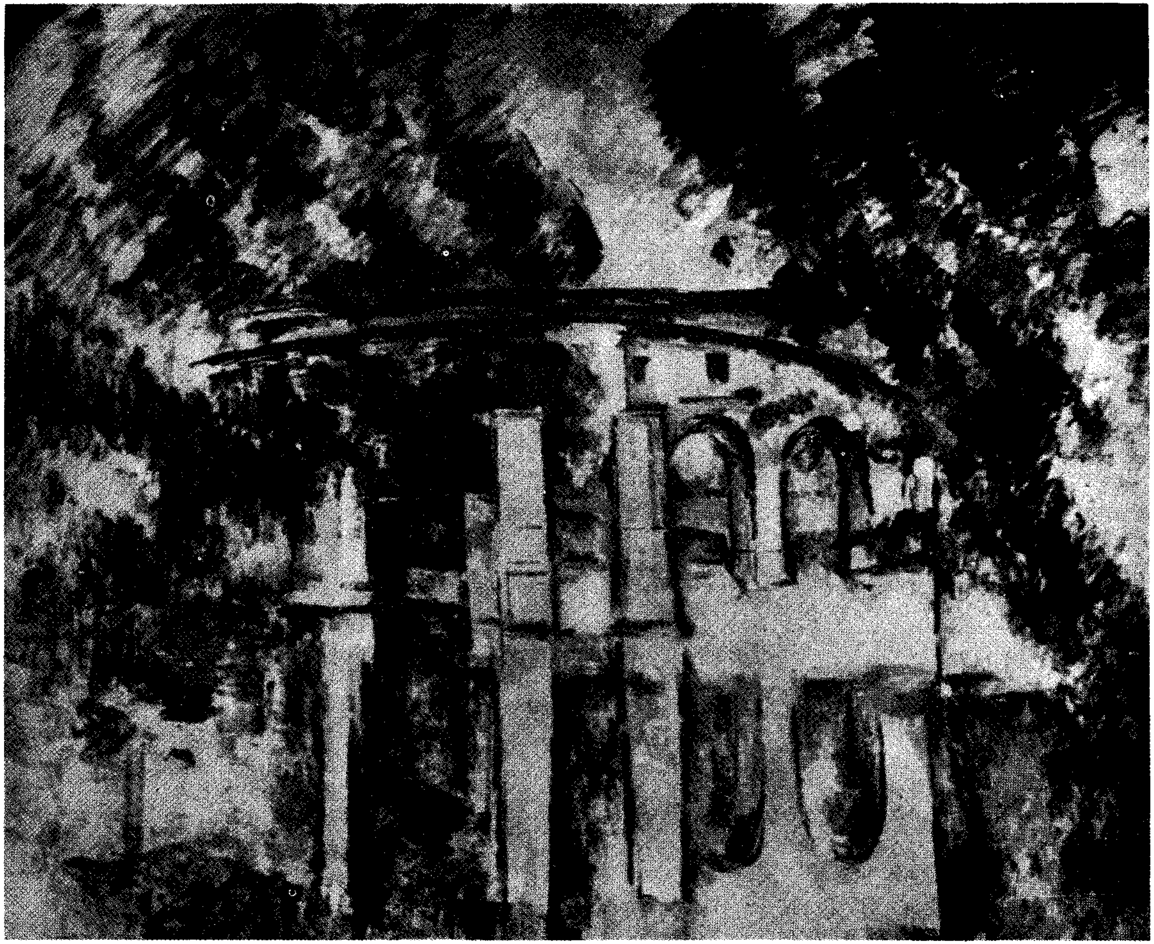
This shift of man's spiritual centre of gravity towards the inorganic, his feeling of his way into the inorganic world may indeed legitimately be called a 'cosmic' disturbance. It is first of all a disturbance in the microcosm of man, who now begins to show a one-sided development of his faculties, those corresponding to the character of the inorganic world tend to unfold unduly, while those spiritual organs and faculties which deal with organic and spiritual life tend to become atrophied; hence a decay of the intuitive understanding, of the ability to grasp a thing in its wholeness, of the physiognomic sense and of the sense for symbols. At the other extreme there is a disturbance of macrocosmic relationships, a result of the especial favour and protection which the inorganic now enjoys—almost always at the expense, not to say the ruin, of the organic. The raping and destruction of the earth, the nourisher of man, is an obvious example and one which in its turn reflects the distortion of the human microcosm for the spiritual side of man pays just that kind of price and is subject to a similar process of ruin, and the end is that man, having denied the reality of all higher forms of being, becomes utterly rooted in the inorganic sphere.

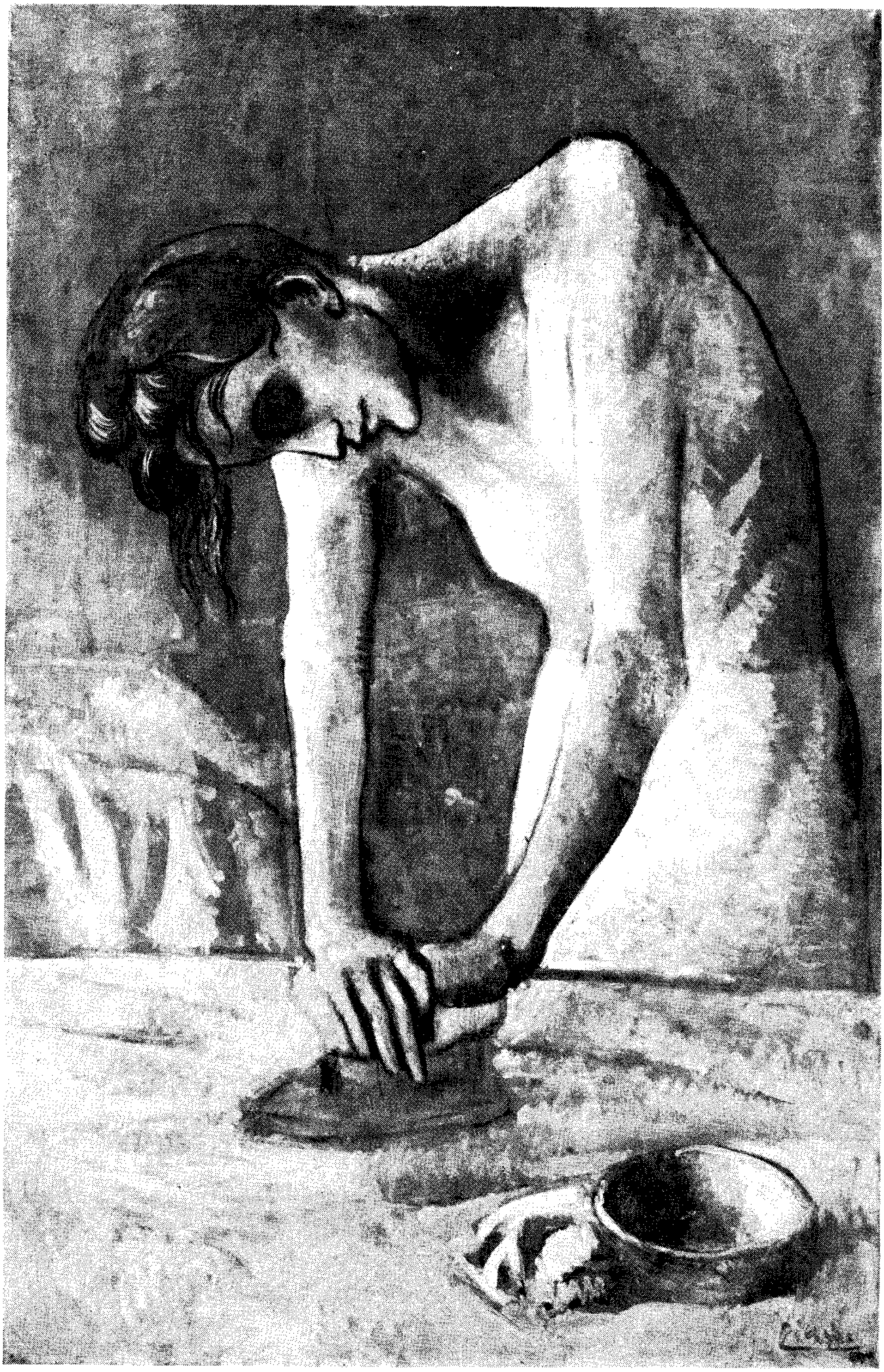
Here then is the essential matter that has been made plain and here lies the culminating point of this enquiry. The present condition of man which can be discerned under the symbols of his art reflects a disturbance, the heart of which lies in man himself and lies in a distortion of his prime relation to the world and which is only superficially and peripherally a disturbance in the social, economic and cultural fields.

The disturbance does not arise from the mere fact of man's turning to explore the inorganic world nor in the consequences of that exploration. It derives from the circumstance that such preoccupation is not balanced by a harmonious development of spiritual powers on a level with the higher forms of being. In a Leonardo—if we may turn historical for a moment—those powers are still there. His interest in the world of the elements, in

CÉZANNE: LANDSCAPE WITH BRIDGE, 1888–9

'The essential aim of Cézanne is to represent what "pure" vision can discover in the visible world—vision, that is to say, that has been cleansed of all intellectual and emotional adulteration. This conception of the painter's task leads to a kind of painting in which mere paint enjoys a quite peculiar supremacy; colour employed purely two-dimensionally acquires a quite new and peculiar life of its own.'
(*See page* 131.)





Collection Mr. and Mrs. J. K. Thannhauser, New York

PICASSO: WOMAN IRONING, 1903 (*See page* 156.)

technical discoveries and machinery, is counterbalanced by an equally lively interest in the world of organic nature, of art and of the spirit. When, therefore, we summarize our diagnosis, to which we are irresistibly driven by our examination of modern art, under the formula 'loss of the mean', what we really have in mind is the hypertrophe of the lower forms of our mental life at the expense of the higher.

Now it is worth observing that, at the stage we have now reached, however, no art can really survive at all, and artists must necessarily abdicate in favour of the builder and the engineer. These last are also creative in their own way and are certainly something more than calculators, but they are not creative after the manner of the organic and spiritual.

But not only is art incapable of surviving under such conditions, man cannot survive under them.[1] In vain does he seek to adapt himself to the conditions which his own spirit has created, even, as Ernst Jünger says, subjecting himself to 'an operation by which the zone of sensibility is cut out of his life', or seeking to achieve his purpose by renouncing that individual freedom which is integral to his being. He permits himself to become, as his art most clearly shows, 'a thing among things, and he does so amid general approval'—as Georges Bernanos says, 'He will be unable to live in this world, or, if he does so, it will be under the condition that he becomes progressively less of a man.'[2]

The disturbance here diagnosed is mortal. It is a sickness unto death.

DESCENT TO THE CHAOTIC

There is a province—and it is one to whose existence modern art and in particular that of the Surrealist bears eloquent testimony—which lies even deeper than that of the inorganic as here defined. In this last, whether we are dealing with the elements or with man or with the total ordering of society, there is still order; even though that order be not a living order, there is law and meaning. Sharply separated from this, and separated off in a downward direction (and partaking both of the cold and the fiery character of the other), there is a world of dissolution and disintegration, of the fortuitous and disordered, a world of contradictions, irrationality and of the unnatural. We can recognize its inwardness and the principles that give it being in Hieronymus Bosch's pictures of Hell, which tell us far more than words could do. These works are about equalled in this respect by a few Surrealist paintings, especially by certain works of Max Ernst and Dali which are particularly eloquent in this connection, but they have rarely been surpassed. We need have no particular flair for metaphysics to be aware of the existence of the world of Chaos, for it is entirely real and has become visible all about us. The supreme achievements of total war show it to us naked and complete, though in a more veiled and fragmentary form it is there for us to behold in our great modern cities. It was discovered with peculiar delight by the Surrealists in the topsyturvydom of a junk-shop, and one can separate it easily enough from the world of the inorganic by simply describing it. What then takes shape before us corresponds absolutely with that state which to the Christian is Hell, and it is this that has become part of the inner world of man's soul.

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[1] Ernst Jünger, 'Über den Schmerz', in *Blätter und Steine* (2nd edition, Hamburg, 1941).

[2] Georges Bernanos, *World Without Freedom* (1946).

It is undeniable that the modern spirit has penetrated as deeply into this world as it has into the world of the inorganic, and as in the latter case it has succeeded in doing this by developing those faculties, those organs one might almost say, which are consonant to this lowest of all imaginable worlds.

The modes of conduct which are thereby entailed consist of an estrangement from the world, a quality of thought that verges on madness and in the giving of free rein to the lowest appetites. Whereas the desire for gain and the love of power are correlated with our preoccupation with the inorganic, this conversion towards the nether abyss is related to a different pattern of behaviour, one marked by an unleashing of the sexual instinct and of the urge for murder, and destruction, all these appearing for the most part in a perverted form. It is total chaos that is produced by the release of these passions. This trend towards the chaotic accompanies that towards the inorganic, as though it were the latter's shadow. Both display features which recall the effects of neurotic disturbances and mental disease in the individual.

'ANALOGIA MORBI'

But there are broader and more general analogies to be made, which bear chiefly on the phenomena described earlier in this chapter. Let us cursorily examine some of them. This will enable us to examine and order the symptoms we have observed from a new angle. It will also enable us to complete the general picture of the disturbance by introducing into it a record of certain other symptoms which have been overlooked or have, at best, received insufficient consideration.

Thus in the case of mental illness we have the typical feeling of 'hanging in the air', we have the condition in which the outer world seems to become strange, cold and dead. We have the symptom of the patient's losing himself in the past or the future. 'I lived my life in reverse,' says one such patient, 'the present was no longer there. I lost myself in living backwards.' 'I saw far ahead,' says another, 'and I myself no longer lived in the present.'[1] 'I saw with different eyes. I no longer saw the people of today and yesterday, but I saw each one of them as he was at the day of his death.' 'The fundamental mood in such cases of melancholia', says the compiler of these records, 'might be described as one fraught with the feeling of the end of the world' (*wie am jüngsten Tag*), as though the patient were experiencing 'a permanent *Dies Irae*' (*Dies Irae in Permanenz*). But this almost exactly describes one of the tentative moods of Expressionism.

Futurism, too, has pathological phenomena that correspond to it—the fear of a catastrophic future, a thing that applies not only to the symptoms of individual disease but equally to what may be called the disease of the age. Incidentally, it is the mark of certain types of madness that the sufferer lives entirely in the future. He makes programmes, forges plans, he anticipates the future continually and treats its potentialities as though they had already been realized. He is 'full of the future'. 'Further in the nihilist obsessions of melancholia yet another thing occurs. Not only values themselves but the things to which the values are attached are conjured out of existence. The world itself is drawn into the vortex of nothingness, something is attained that might be called "de-realization".' 'All worldly things around me have disappeared. I only see the world beyond. I am to create the entire world and I cannot do it. I am to replace the seas, the mountains and everything else.'[1] Cubism and Constructivism here provide the analogy. There is further the exaggeration of dimension—analogous to 'megalomania' in art, there is loss of the 'fluid style'—analogous to the patchwork technique observable in more than one of the movements in modern art, the preponderance of the expressive over the representational function—analagous to Expressionism, there is the phenomenon of the mental life on the borderland of slumber (*das Einschlafdenken*)—analogous to the painting of Cézanne, the experiencing of one's own inner life as though it was something alien and came from the outside; this last really describes what we call hallucination and its analogies are to be found in the work of Goya, Füssli, Ensor, Kubin and the Surrealists.

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[1] Viktor E. Frankl, *Ärztliche Seelsorge* (4th edition, Vienna, 1947).

These observations should not be interpreted as implying that modern art is the creation of neurotics and psychopaths—even though in the case of individual artists certain indications would seem to argue something of the kind. Indeed, the very act of making any such general inference might itself be said to add another clinical symptom to those which our age can already show, for lunatics cannot create real art at all. The product of any art is a creative achievement, and the sufferings which the world makes the artist's portion is not suffering occasioned by a disease. His suffering is directed towards the world itself.

Nevertheless these analogies would seem to indicate that apart from the sickness of individuals so affected there is also a sickness of the age and that the general clinical background in the case of the one is pretty much the same as it is in the other, and that in each case the same quality of feeling accompanies the malady, namely fear, melancholy and loss of reality, though in the one instance these feelings are collectivized and in the other they are not.

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[1] Frankl, *op. cit.*

One is therefore tempted to seek—and indeed to find—the cause of the world's present condition, so glaringly illuminated by the symbols of its art, in the same basic condition that accompanies the malady of individuals.[1] One is tempted to seek it both in that excessive rationality that is the mark of modern building and also in that hypotonia of consciousness that finds its analogy in the irrationalism of modern painting and in its 'dream art', and in the sense of a vast cleft between what ought to be and what is (dialectical theology, existentialism), in that striving to be God's equal which is so impatient of the imperfections of His creatures and tends to end in utter inhumanity—everywhere here there is a loss of the mean.

We will not follow any further the path of enquiry that seems here to lie open before us, but rather search out the way back to the origin of the 'modern' by examining its art and the actual history and pre-history of the present age.

[1] Cf. also Frankl, *op. cit.*, on the characteristics of anxiety neurosis and compulsion neurosis in their relation to the 'centre' of these disturbances.

VIII

'AUTONOMOUS' MAN

THE PROBLEM OF CAUSES

IF we enquired into the causes of the disturbed condition we have just observed—and the question here raised is undeniably a burning one, in so far as everything else depends on it—then we are faced by two wholly separate problems.

One of them involves nothing more than the question of which phenomena here under discussion are basic and central and which peripheral and secondary. Here we are concerned with the 'structure' of the condition as a whole, with the disease as a clinical problem and the course which it has taken and is likely to take. The second problem is that of the actual origin of the malady. What factors have brought it about and in what way did they have to combine before it could arise at all?

Strictly speaking our first task—following Croce's principle that the whole is understood by means of the parts and the parts by means of the whole—should be to discover the relation to one another of the most obvious symptoms in the malady—dehumanization, the conversion towards the inorganic and the chaotic, and that subsisting between these symptoms and other phenomena. There is of course the question whether all these symptoms are to be related to one and the same disease, or whether we are dealing with several processes superimposed one upon the other.

To complete such a structural analysis of the general disturbance, however, would take us beyond the limits of the present enquiry. Our intention here is merely to show that phenomena in the field of art, in so far as one can recognize their symbolic character, provide clear indications as to the structure and development of the general disturbance. From these indications we can deduce a very provisional plan of the various interrelationships we are seeking to lay bare.

THE DISTURBANCE IS TOTAL

First and foremost, what we can learn from art in its most significant manifestations is that the disturbance extends to man in all his different aspects and relationships. There is the disturbance of man's relation to God. In the sphere of art this is made more palpable than anywhere else by the nature of the task that now absorbs creative energy—an energy which previously had been absorbed by the temple, the church and the sacred image. Man's new gods are Nature, Art, the Machine, the Universe, Chaos and Nothingness.

There is the disturbance of man's relation to himself. He looks upon himself—this is abundantly clear from his manner of portraying man—with mistrust, fear and despair. He feels himself delivered over to death. The world of his reason has been torn asunder from that of his instincts, and this rift is reflected in the contrast between the cult of rationality in modern building and the cult of the irrational in painting. One province is utterly lacking in warmth; the other is devoid of spiritual light, it glows but only darkly. These two main trends of modern art—they are the ones of which modern man is prouder than of any other—tellingly illustrate the diagnosis of Ivanov: 'Never, it seems to me, was man so molten and fluid, and yet never was he so shut up within himself, never so walled about as he is today, and never was he so cold of heart.'

There is disturbance in the relationship between man and man. This becomes directly apparent in those movements of modern painting in which man is put on the same level as all other visible objects and finally degraded to the level of things utterly and completely dead. As in the pathological disturbances of individual consciousness, man has become oblivious of the fact that other men have mental and spiritual lives as much as himself.

There is disturbance in man's relationship to nature. That relationship changes—the thing is plainly to be seen in the phenomenon of the park—into something passive and sentimental;

man no longer feels himself to be the crown of creation, nature's Lord and centre. As against this, it becomes transformed—as we see in the case of the engineer—into something cold and brutal. There is in particular a disturbance with the relationship to the earth, with which man has always felt a certain solidarity, and this too is more than plain to see in the 'earthless' quality of modern building.

There is disturbance in man's relationship to time. Since he is incapable of grasping eternity as something outside of time, he thinks of it as endless time. The present is lost to him. It is for him, not the standing still of time in the 'moment' in which time and eternity touch one another, but a point without extension lying between what is no longer and what not yet is. This is the nihilism of the temporal.[1]

Having thus lost the sense of the nature of eternity, he seeks his lost perfection either in the distant past or in the distant future—as we can see in the way in which painting is torn hither and thither between futurism and the primitive. 'The gift of artistic perfection', says Lionello Venturi,[2] 'has been taken from the life eternal where it belongs and ascribed to some time in the future or the past.' His Paradise no longer lies in eternity but here on earth in some distant province of time or space, in the 'innocence' of the South Seas or in the utopia of a perfect society—or again in the depths of the unconscious.

There is disturbance in the relationship of man to the spiritual world. It is as though the gate to the nether world has been opened, and that world now pours into the whole of life and infects every part of it. Nowhere is the demoniac quality that has taken hold of modern art more palpable than in those movements which, with a degree of power formerly only exhibited in portraying the world of the saints, consciously or unconsciously make visible to us the irruption of this chaotic nether world into the world of man.

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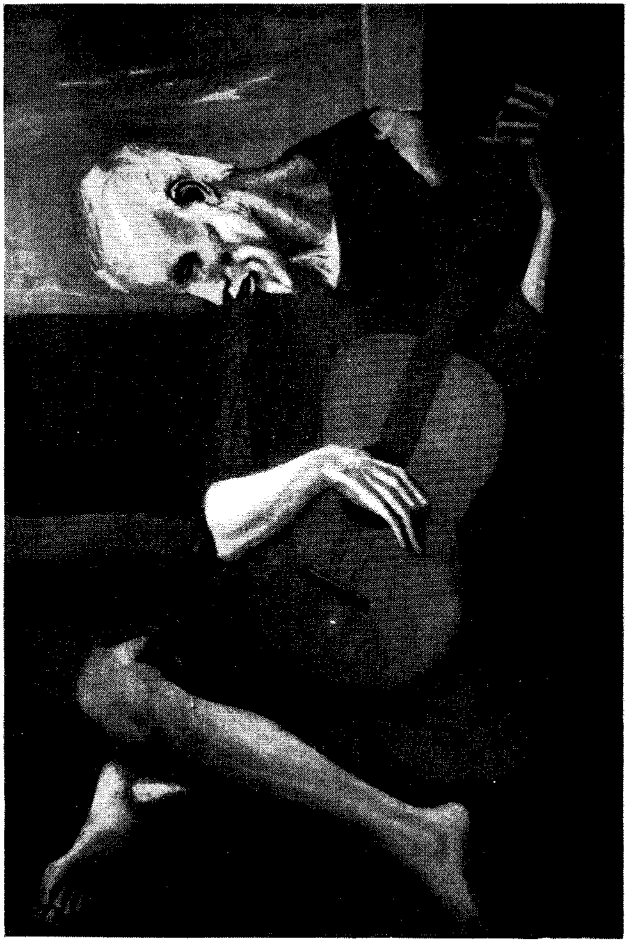
[1] Cf. Franz von Baader, *Elementarbegriffe über die Zeit* (1831), and Otto Friedrich Bollnow, *Das Wesen der glücklichen Stimmung* (Frankfurt am Main, 1941).

[2] Lionello Venturi, 'La critique d'art en France dès 1840 à 1850', in *Resumés du XIVe congrès international d'histoire de l'art* (1936.)

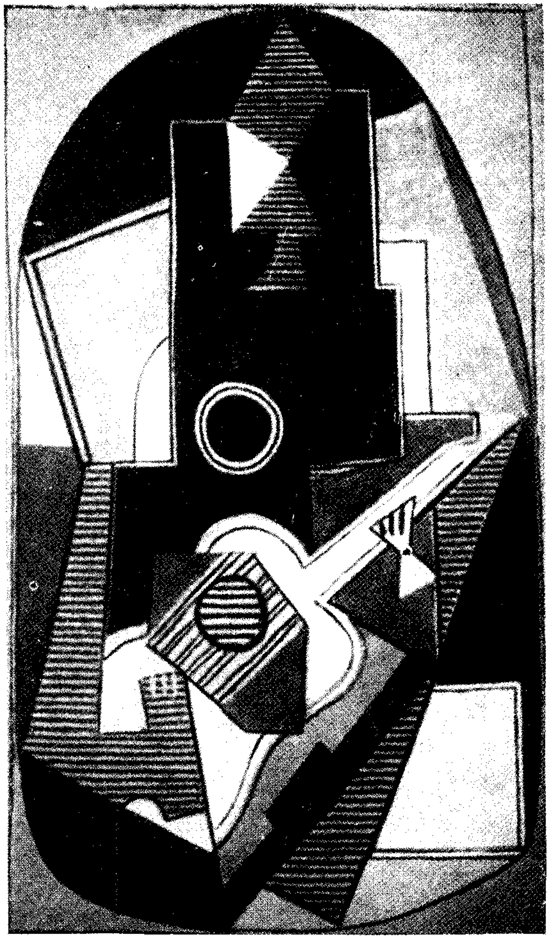


Courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago

PICASSO: THE OLD GUITARIST, 1903 (*left*); and STREET SINGER, 1923 (*right*)

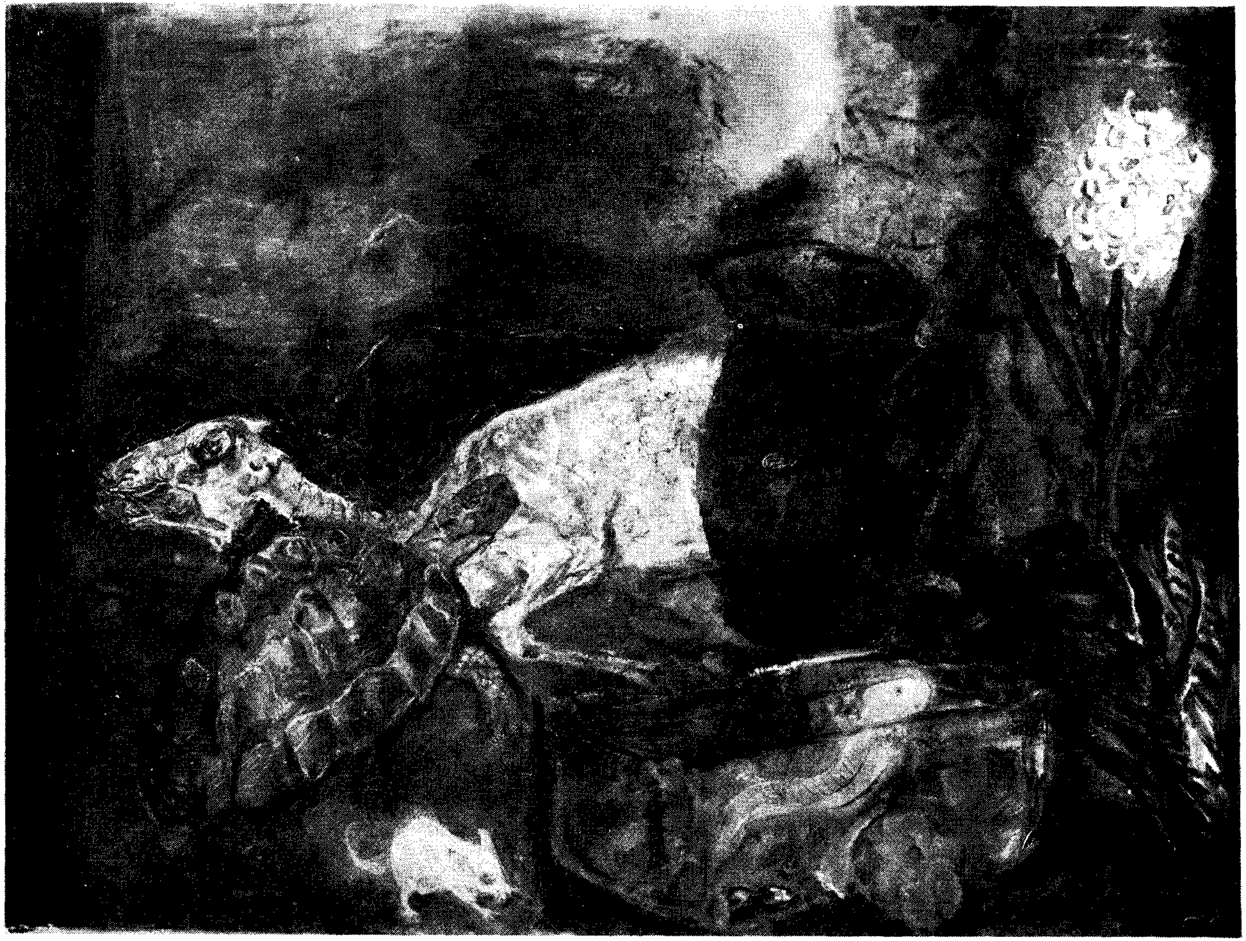
'Picasso's art no longer seeks the complete human being at all. It has lost the faculty of seeing things as wholes. It tears off one cover after another in order to lay bare the structure of nature and in doing so penetrates even further into the depths, disclosing the images of things truly monstrous.'—*Berdyaev.*

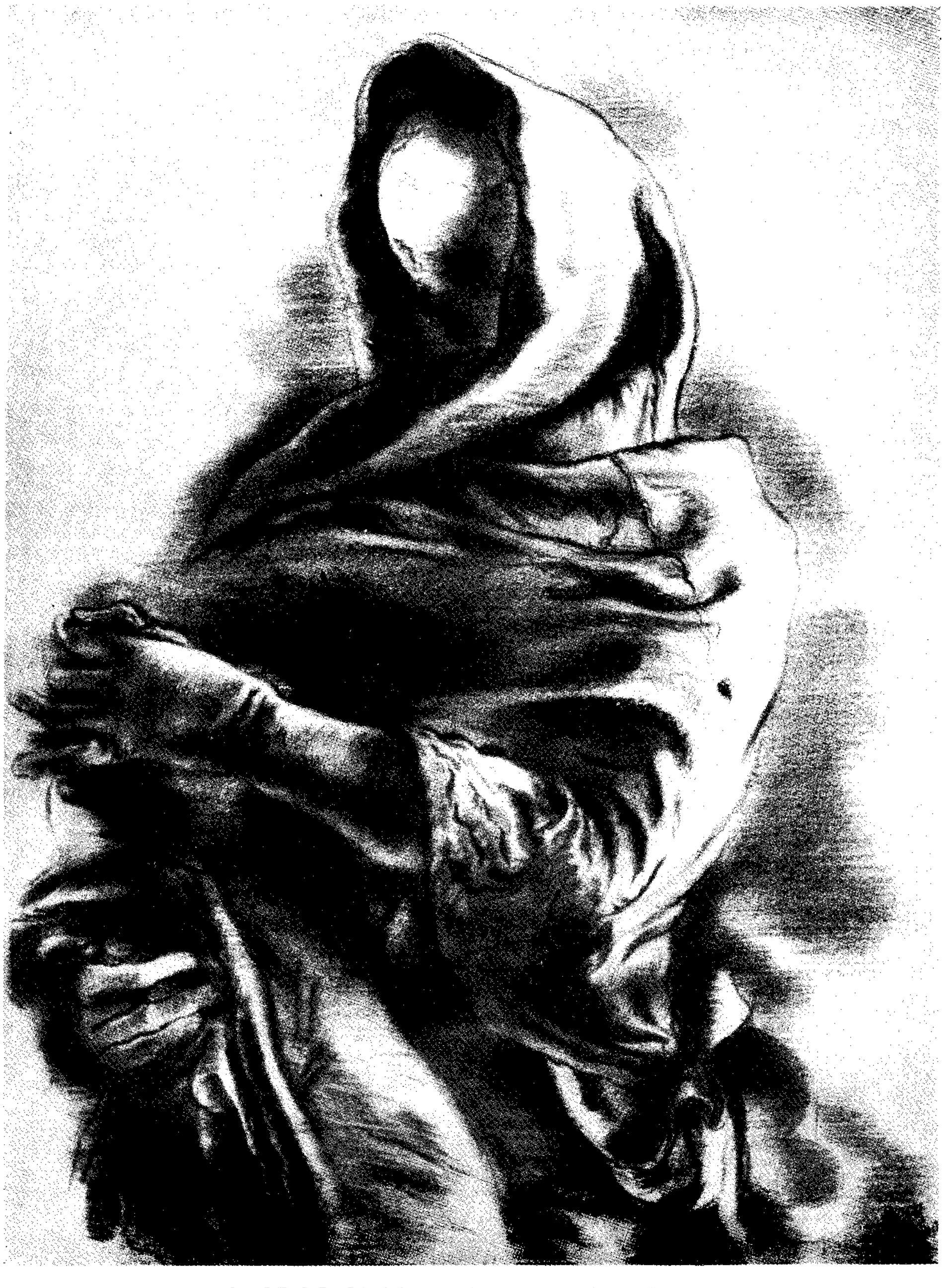
(*See page* 156.)



KOKOSCHKA:
STILL LIFE WITH
SKINNED SHEEP

'To look at this picture is to be seduced into the realm of the morbid and its danger lies in the very effectiveness of its seduction.' (*See page* 220.)

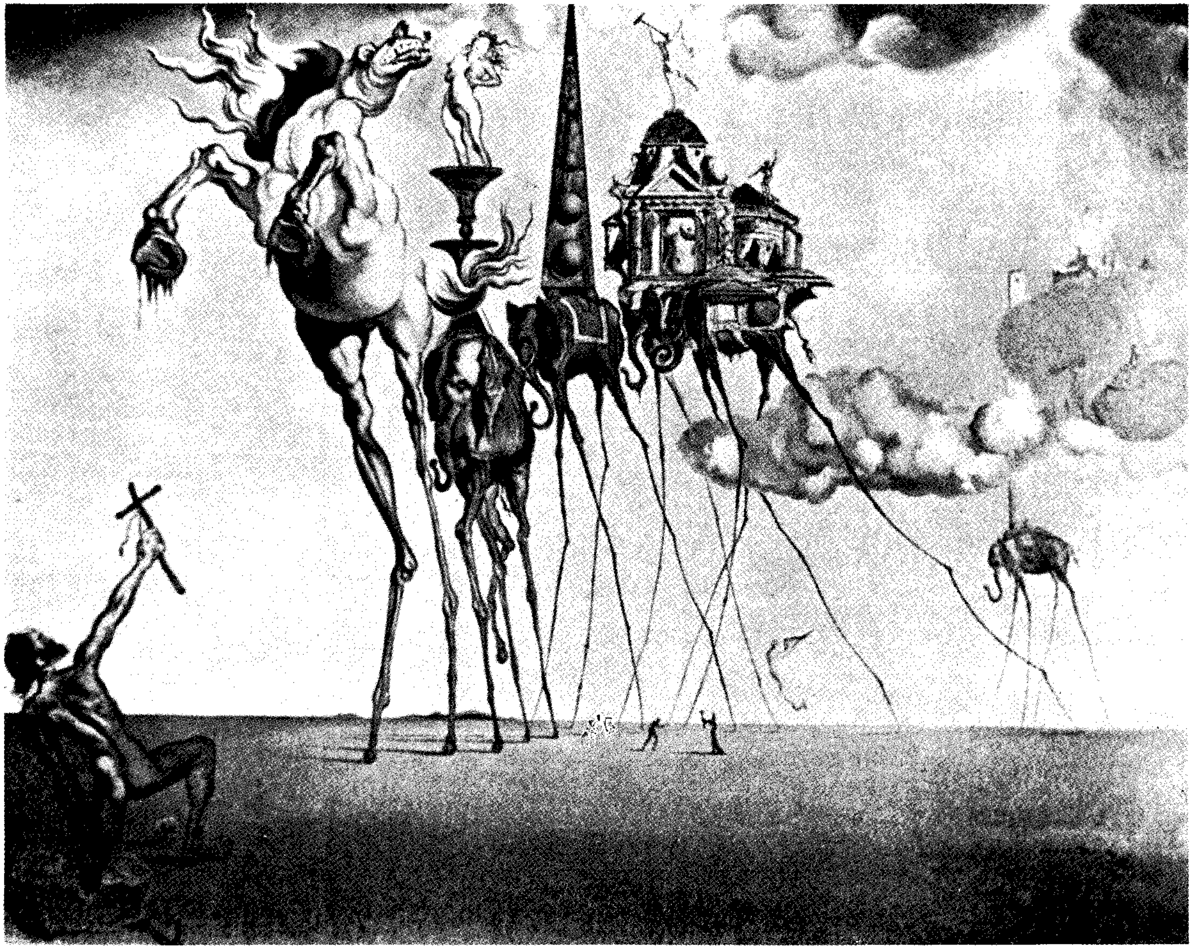




GEORGE GROSZ: DRAPED FIGURE, 1936
Draping material round a puppet makes it—intentionally or unintentionally—the living image of death. (*See page* 138.)

DALI: THE TEMPTATION OF ST. ANTHONY, 1936

'The visible world, the world of actual forms in portraiture, landscape, still life and every other kind of painting, even in what is alleged to be religious art, becomes alien, distorted and horrible.'
(*See page* 136.)



AUTONOMOUS ART AND AUTONOMOUS MAN

What we can see in art, however, also provides an unmistakable indication of the zone in which we will find that the innermost core of the malady resides.

In art the dominant thing is obviously the urge towards autonomy, towards purity whether it be of art as a whole or of the individual arts. It is, as we have seen, that which explains the degradation of art to the level of sub-art. It also explains a number of other phenomena. From the urge to achieve pure architecture there results the dissolution of architecture and its replacement by engineering construction, there also results its earthlessness. From the quest for pure painting there results the degradation of man, who is put on a level with inanimate objects; there also results the abandonment of anything like objective representation. The pursuit of supposedly 'pure' art results in the elimination of its intellectual content and its descent into the region of the sub-rational, and all these things together produce the 'polarization' of architecture and painting.

Transfer these observations from art as a whole to man as a whole, and we are strongly tempted to conclude that here too the primary disturbance derives from the pursuit of autonomy and of 'purity' in our conceptions both of man and God; the desire to eliminate the ultramundane element in man and the personal element in God.

We are, of course, here proceeding by mere analogy—and it is a very daring analogy at that. But the actual historical facts really justify us in a quite remarkable degree. In that same province of history from where springs the urge to autonomy in art, we find the beginnings of the separation of God and man, the two things occur very nearly at the same time, though this proclamation of the autonomous man is, as we should expect, slightly earlier than the corresponding phenomenon in the arts by which it is reflected.

In the pantheism and deism of the eighteenth century a gulf was opened up between man and God. At first the idea of God seemed much purer than that of a personal God. Our notion of God became divested of what seemed to be an anthropomorphic element, even as that element was expelled from architecture. What happened, however, was that this God of the philosophers evaporated into nature and vanished. While this was happening, something was also changing in the idea of man, which was divested of its theomorphic element even as God has been divested of the anthropomorphic. The result was very different from what had been intended, for man by this process was reduced to the level of an automaton—when he was not reduced to that of a demon.

What began to be missing was the mediation between God and man that had been there ever since man existed on this planet. This is what makes the disturbance unique, it is what makes it a thing for which there is no historical analogy. It is part of the same order of ideas that men should cease to believe in the concept of man, made in the image of God, though ultimately without that the idea of man cannot be held fast at all. It should here be observed that genuine art also is a form of mediation, and it is thus understandable in the circumstances of the case that art too—though seemingly freed from its so-called fetters—should disappear.

Now it should be clear that this holding apart of God and man is something that goes contrary to the nature of both. If consistently adhered to, it must end in man's violent descent into the sub-human. It seems to have been the destiny imposed upon the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to demonstrate the falsity of the conception of autonomous men and to undertake this task of refutation in a vast historical experiment accompanied by untold suffering.

The outcome of that experiment can already be seen around us and the influence from it is palpable. Autonomous man does not and cannot exist—any more than can autonomous art, architecture, painting and so on. It is of the essence of man that he should be both natural and supernatural. The human and divine elements in him cannot be separated without the human element suffering some damage thereby. Man is fully man only in so far as he is a repository of the divine spirit.

If we look at the matter thus, the disturbance which we called the loss of centre or loss of the mean is seen to have its origin in the forcible separation of the human and the divine in man, in the tearing apart of one from the other, and in the loss of the mediator between man and God, the God-man. The lost centre of man is simply God, and the innermost core of his disease is the loss of his relationship with Him. The fact that the figure of supposedly autonomous man starts at the beginning of the modern world, has been recognized before now, but the knowledge of this truth is far from being widespread, and few people realize the connection between man's declaration of autonomy and his loss of his true nature, his self-degradation to the level of the inorganic and ultimately of the chaotic.

STRUCTURE OF THE DISTURBANCE

To summarize this very brief and tentative sketch which makes no claim to completeness—the various individual symptoms of the disturbance seem to hang together roughly as follows:

Man strives for autonomy and he insists that the divine and the human should each in its own way be pure.

The idea that God must not be conceived on any human analogy already implies the denial of the conception of man made in God's image. This again already implies, though it may not immediately be recognized as such and it may be some time before the thing actually works itself out, a definite degradation of man. The relation between God and man, however, is meanwhile being put under strain. Ultimately it snaps. Divinity becomes identical with the universe and in the end it is into that universe that it disappears.

Man thus loses his connection with God, and 'communion' with Him disappears together with sacrifice and prayer. All that remains of prayer is the hymn, the prayer of praise. He shuts himself off, so to speak, from above and opens himself at the sides to the infinite universe—the symbol of the platform—but the universe rejects him as something alien to itself for which it has no feeling.

Nature and history become estranged from man. They become increasingly lifeless. This incidentally is the price that man pays for having control of them.

Man becomes a solitary in the midst of nature. He is thrust back upon himself, but to seek to be at rest wholly within himself is the way to madness; it is 'Hell'. 'Hell', says Berdyaev, 'consists in man's refusal to renounce his solitude.'[1]

Now the loss of God as a reality destroys the original sense of reality as a whole.

Having lost that sense, man turns into an anti-realist, into an idealist, a being living among phantasms—the analogy here is madness which also consists in disturbance of one's apprehension of the real world.

Apart from mere phantasms, partial realities now assume the place once taken by reality itself, and in a fragmented world this often produces great increases in knowledge over a limited field, and is the means of achieving valuable practical results. Even so, the wholeness of human personality—the 'heart' in Pascal's sense of the term—tends to disappear, tends to be destroyed, and, with it, the synthesizing power of the conscious mind. Shreds of the torn personality and of its fragmented consciousness continue to live on after the fashion of a phantasmagoria—and these fragments continue to dream.

Here we have the art of the 'isms' and this is where we have arrived today.

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[1] N. Berdyaev, *On Human Destiny.*

IX

AT THE ORIGINS OF THE PRESENT

All godlessness proceeds from a false compounding or a false separation of the Creator from the created.—FRANZ VON BAADER.

DEISM AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

ONCE one has grasped that the origin of the disturbance is that false separation between the nature of the Creator and that of His creatures, one finds art indicating in numerous ways that this separation has taken place in the most varied forms, each one of which can be correlated with certain specific phenomena of modern art and indeed with modern life as a whole.

For instance, in the radical form of Deism the divorce between God and man arises from the fact that God is relegated into the far distance, so that God and the world begin to be regarded as distinct and wholly separated things. God is the 'absent God' who created the great clock which is the world and duly wound it up. That clock now continues to run according to its own inner laws, which means that the world unfolds itself automatically. This excludes the possibility of any personal relation to God. All mystery is eliminated—indeed, the chief work of one of the protagonists of Deism, Toland, is called 'Christianity not Mysterious'. Religion becomes a matter of natural reason.

Franz von Baader's profound insight has made plain what the consequences must be. 'As man stands to God, so must he stand to his fellow men, to nature, and to the spiritual world.' Everywhere spiritual relations now grow cold. Their place is taken by the frigid relations of reason; doubt plays an ever more decisive part, and everything that feels the touch of this coldness is transformed: the world becomes a world machine—man an '*homme-machine*' and the state a state machine. Ledoux, who was doubtless an adept in this peculiar type of religious sentiment, asks, as he contemplates the earth: '*Cette machine ronde, n'est elle pas sublime?*'

Man now becomes as isolated towards his fellows as he is towards God, and as isolated towards nature. He is, as Ledoux himself says, 'isolated everywhere'. We must thus infer that Deism stands at the origin of those varied phenomena which are characterized in Chapter VIII as a 'tendency towards the inorganic'. Its effect is everywhere deadening and it makes men strangers to God and to each other.

'Heaven and Earth are parted and all things grow cold', says *I Ch'ing*, the Chinese book of wisdom.

THE PANTHEISM OF HÖLDERLIN

So eisern mein Himmel ist
So steinern bin ich.[1]—HÖLDERLIN

Yet there are more sublime forms of estrangement between God and man. One of them made a glorious appearance in the work of Hölderlin, and was shown forth to the world in his personal suffering, much as the lot of man without God was shown forth in the work of Nietzsche. Both men came near to madness.

Hölderlin still knows that there must be mediation between God and man:

Denn nimmermehr herrscht er (der Vater) allein
Und weiss nicht alles. Immer stehet irgend
Eins zwischen Menschen und ihm.
Und treppenweise steiget
Der Himmlische nieder.[2] (*Der Einzige.*)

---

[1] As my heaven is of iron
So am I myself of stone.

[2] For never more does He (the Father) stand alone
Nor does He know all. Ever there stands
Something between Man and Himself
And step by step
The Heavenly One descends.

Yet at the same time the personal God, even 'the Father', is subordinated to the idea of 'The Divine' (a neuter thing and '*er weiss nicht alles*' (nor does he know all). A certain sense of shame prevents him speaking of the Divine as *das gott* (*i.e.* God with a neuter article) as has occurred in our own day on the supposed authority of ancient Germanic custom. As soon as that happens the blasphemy is too palpable to be denied.

The individual figures, part human, part divine, in whom Hölderlin worships 'the divine'—Christ, Heracles and Dionysus—resolve themselves into a nebulous something, that is, so to speak, pre-divine or super-divine.

This becomes all the clearer with the course of time when Hölderlin addresses his 'Holiest', nature. He prays to something that seems to him older and more holy than the figures of the personal Gods. 'The great holy thing' which Hölderlin recognizes in nature is nothing that is close or familiar to man; he cannot, as it were, 'feel his way into it', he cannot discover himself in it, nor, as the past age was able to do, can he look on nature as a kinswoman and a friend.

The 'great holy thing' is none of these things, rather is it something that wholly lacks a human character, or even an organic one, a thing that has neither personality nor destiny. It is something that is the very opposite to the nature of man, it is the universal thing, a thing that cannot actually be felt and is infinite. Hölderlin likes best to designate it as '*stille*' ('quietness' or 'silence'), thus contrasting it with the busy activities of men. In order to approach it man must first destroy himself, he must go to his death. That is why mortals often are drawn by

Das wunderbare Sehnen dem Abgrund zu,
Und kaum der Erd' entstiegen, desselben Tags
Kehrt weinend zum Geburtsort schon aus
Purpurner Höhe die Wolke wieder.

Und Völker auch ergreifet die Todeslust
Und Heldenstädte sinken; die Erde grünt
Und stille vor den Sternen liegt, den
Betenden gleich, in den Staub geworfen.

Freiwillig überwunden die lange Kunst
Vor jenen Unnachahmbaren da; er selbst,
Der Mensch mit eigener Hand zerbrach, die
Hohen zu ehren, sein Werk der Künstler.[1]
(*Stimme des Volks.*)

This passage of Hölderlin's describes the whole destiny of men, when they conceive God in this fashion, either collectively or individually—always assuming that they take their relation to this inhuman godhead as seriously as did Hölderlin.

It also describes the destiny of art and gives the essential key to a really profound interpretation of modern art—at least in its first or early phase—and throws a light on more than one of its features that have hitherto been somewhat imperfectly understood.

It explains, for instance, that curious characteristic of modern art described by the German work *Uneinfühlbarkeit*, i.e. a quality that makes it difficult for a man to 'feel his way into it', a characteristic which has long caused men to contrast it with that quality of the Gothic, the Renaissance and the Baroque that brings the art of those periods somehow near to man, for an art which, being less logical than Hölderlin himself, seeks to serve an inhuman godhead cannot itself be so very different from the thing it serves.

It also declares the doubts whether art indeed has the last word, doubts expressed by such men as Rousseau—who did so on moral grounds and claimed that art was harmful for the citizen. Hölderlin, as we have seen, declares that art, which to some extent is the

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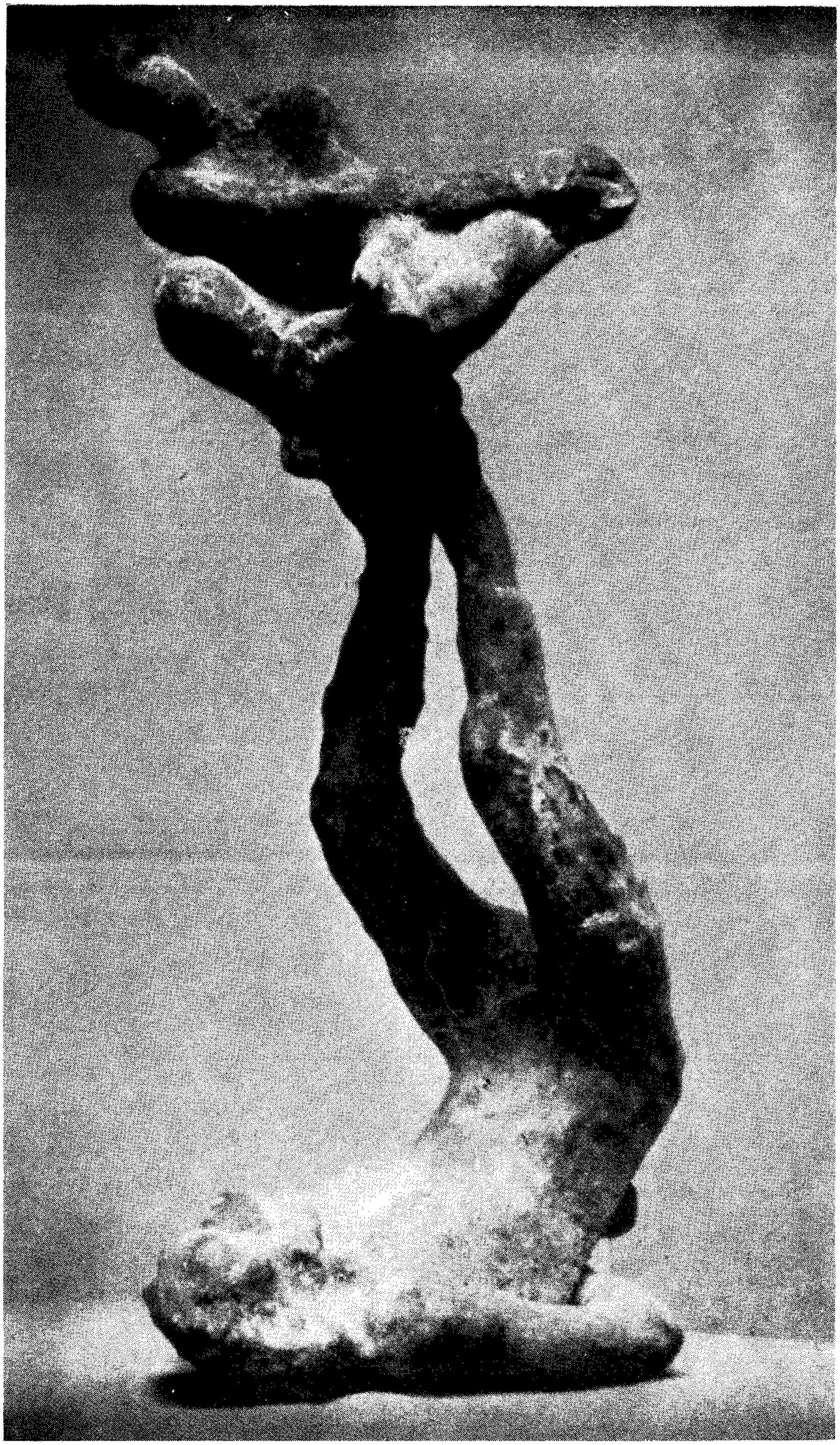
[1] A literal translation of this kind of verse tends always to be slightly ludicrous. Since, however, it is more important that the reader should get the exact meaning than that he should experience æsthetic pleasure (assuming that the translator were capable of providing it), a literal translation is here subjoined:

> The wonderful longing for the abyss, and hardly risen from the hills on the same day the cloud returns weeping to the place of its birth out of the purple heights.
>
> The lust for death seizes whole peoples, and the cities of heroes sink, the earth grows green, and silent before the stars, thrown in the dust, like one in prayer, before those inimitable ones, voluntarily overcome, lies long art.
>
> He himself, man, the artist, broke it, to honour the high ones.



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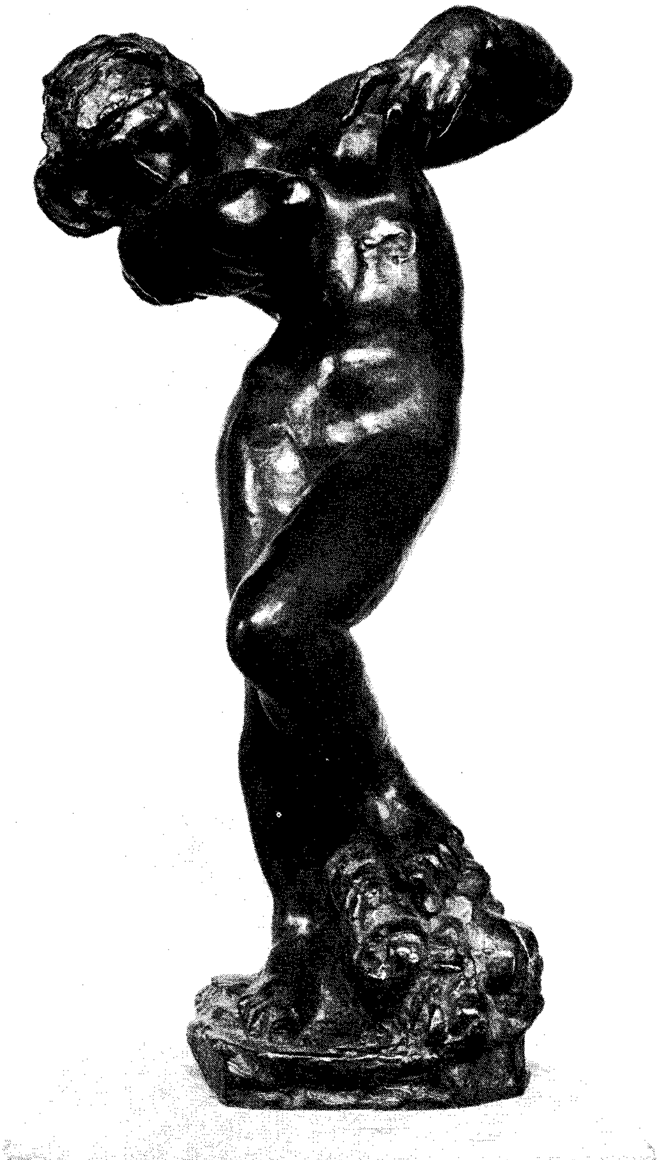
RODIN: THE TUMBLER, Maquette, *circa* 1900
'As in painting, a certain instability comes into evidence.' (*See page* 113.)



RODIN: MEDITATION

'The sculptor alone throughout the nineteenth century preserves something of the dignity of man.' (*See page* 112.)

last mediatory principle between God and men, must be sacrificed so that honour must be thus done to the 'inimitable'. Thus, like Chronos, the Pantheistic divinity, as Franz von Baader points out, consumes its own children, man and art.

To distinguish it from pure Deism, this religion still possesses mystery and prayer. Yet, despite this, the isolated state of man and his desertion by God are scarcely less terrible, nor does his world to any degree grow less alien and cold.

The sublime echo of this last in the fine arts is to be found in the painting of Caspar David Friedrich, while the spiritual state that is proper to it, even though it may on occasion be disguised by mirth, is one of profound melancholy, and a sadness unto death.

ANTI-THEISM

Yet another form of the rift which man tears open between himself and God is a new form of atheism or what could more correctly be called anti-theism, which carries its principles to their uttermost conclusions. It has very little to do with the more ancient forms of atheism. Rather is it the philosophy that was expressed quite unequivocally in the proclamations of the Surrealists—though it was actually conceived in the eighteenth century.[1] Since there is no God, so this philosophy runs, there is no world order. World, man and society are equally chaotic. Men who profess this philosophy tend to fix their gaze, as though spellbound, upon that particular irruption into the texture of the world which seems to confirm their convictions, and further them by mobilizing all those powers in man which serve the cause of chaos and by weakening and disavowing all those powers that offer it resistance.

CAUSES OF THE DISTURBANCE

When all the interconnected spiritual trends to which reference has been made have been far more thoroughly scrutinized, it will be possible in our analysis of the present malady to come near to some kind of answer to the tremendous question of a cause.

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[1] For the proclamation of the Surrealists, cf. the essay of H. Schwarz in *Wort und Wahrheit* (1948), Vol. 2.

All we can do at this juncture is to declare that all the various explanations that have hitherto been attempted explain nothing whatever.

We have seen that the malady affects man in all his relationships to the world, to his fellow men and to himself. That makes it impossible to see the essential cause in economic or social circumstances; such an explanation indeed merely proves that those who resort to it cannot rise above the lower levels of knowledge when they contemplate the world, and is itself a symptom. Whatever secondary factors may be at work, one thing should by now be clear. It is that that essential cause is a change that has taken place within man's soul, and that this is the only thing that can really be called a cause, in the full sense of the word, at all; the cause in fact lies in a free act of the will, and we may accept the hypothesis that has been very adequately confirmed by the present enquiry, that this change, this act of the will, consists in man's shutting himself off against the 'higher reality'.

Let us repeat. Intensive attention paid by the human spirit to the lower forms of nature would produce no disturbance, so long as it remained balanced by the unfolding of those powers of man which correspond to the higher forms of being, which are his true home. Even a transitory shift of man's spiritual and intellectual activities towards the realm of the inorganic, due perhaps to a lack of the ability to unfold all powers at once, could at worst produce a transitory disturbance, which would be more in the nature of a disturbance in the rate of growth than an actual disease. It would continue to produce no more than this limited effect so long as man remained conscious of the fact that there are higher orders of being, and was resolved, after mastering the lower orders of nature, to apply the same spiritual and intellectual passion to the study of the higher provinces of knowledge. It is only man's deliberate separation of himself from the higher reality that causes him to sink into the suborganic world.

This shutting of himself off from above on the part of man is essentially based on an intellectual error—spiritually, however, it derives from pride, pride of man's supposedly autonomous reason—and spiritually it also derives from despair.

Sin is a cutting of oneself off from the divine life, though this conception has largely been lost to the men of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, for today sin is at best pettily regarded as a matter of morals, not as a disturbance in the cosmos of man, not as an impediment to the full human life and a destruction of the sources of that life. Yet in so far as the older view is true, the two typical sins which explain the falling away of modern man and which impress its mark of petrifaction and disintegration upon the age, are intellectual pride and intellectual despair. 'In sin we are all autonomous', says Theodor Haecker.

This inward process at first only affects a small élite. It is strengthened by the peculiar combination of the inorganic sciences on the one hand—these now come magnificently to flower—and capitalism on the other; for capitalism's principal, though not its only root, is also to be found in the facts of religious history, as Max Weber has shown.[1] Modern industry is the child of this marriage, and the whole process was endowed with tremendous dynamism, immediately the industrial worker became a numerically increasing type, who throughout his life was occupied wholly with the inorganic.

The transformation of society now centres wholly around this type and was largely brought about by it, and all this works towards making the fixation of the human mind on the inorganic a permanent one. The type of the inorganic man is proclaimed as the universally valid human type.

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[1] *Gesammelte Aufsätze der Religionssoziologie*, Vol. I (Tübingen, 1920). Cf. also in English, Tawney: *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism.*

X

PRECURSORS OF MODERN ART

DESPITE the fact that the trends here under examination have their origin in the eighteenth century, certain manifestations similar to those described can undoubtedly be traced in much earlier periods of art, but there is no continuous development. Nevertheless, there is something to be learned from these experimental laboratories of history, and a conscientious analyst has the duty of examining them.

Five such nodal points of historic development are in this respect of particular interest:

1. The last phase of the late Romanesque, around 1125, before its supersession by the Gothic.
2. The period of late medieval pictures of Hell, with particular reference to the work of Hieronymus Bosch (*circa* 1500).
3. The art of the 'Mannerists' (1520 to 1590).
4. The art of Bruegel (mid-sixteenth century).
5. English art as a whole, which from this point of view has a special position in the art of Europe.

DEMONISM AND THE LATE ROMANESQUE

If we compare its output with the demoniac elements in modern art, there is especial interest to be found in that short phase, scarcely lasting the span of a generation, which brought the Romanesque to an end—particularly that which ended the Romanesque in France.

It is in this phase that the sacred world is suddenly endowed to a quite terrifying degree with a demoniac character. Thus on the doorways of Autun, Vézelay, Moissac, Souillac and Beaulieu, the sacred figures have the appearance of corpses and of ghosts, a thing that can in no wise be explained by a certain remoteness from humanity that marks the art of the high Middle Ages. Christ sometimes resembles an Asiatic idol or an Asiatic despot. The Apocalyptic beasts and the angels are all distorted by this demoniac quality. This curious phenomenon cannot be explained in terms of the dual intention that is discernible in much medieval art, the intention to administer a certain awful shock to the beholder and at the same time, by means of the sheer absurdity of the visible symbols it created, to spur his mind towards purely spiritual contemplation; for directly beside the sacred figures, and in the very midst of them, and indeed scarcely distinguishable from them at all, are images of demons, and of demoniac beasts and chimæras which even invade the interior of the church.

At the same time the figures themselves begin to acquire a most remarkable and unprecedented quality of instability. Those on the great arch above the door at Vézelay seem positively to be tottering, and look as though they might crash down at any moment from the great curve on which they have so precarious a footing. This is the period when figures begin to be tangentially affixed to the frames of the great doors, and it is to this period that belongs the great Wheel of Fortune that lifts a man up and ineluctably casts him down, and it is this period also that for the very first time stands architectural forms upon their heads.

All this is the visible expression of that *volubilitas rerum*, that instability of human affairs, that people have suddenly begun to feel with a peculiar and painful intensity. It is in fact the visible symbol for the dominant mood, the dominant feeling about life and the world.

In religion the dominant emotion is fear, the principal theme is the Day of Judgement, expressed to the uttermost potential of all the terror that it can inspire. In the crypt-like gloom of the church we can with our mind's eye see the faithful standing 'in fear and trembling before God'. Never has the *mysterium tremendum* attained such force over men's minds.

The epoch is superseded by the first generation of the Gothic. The new human nearness of God, as we find it in Bernard of

Clairvaux, has set love in the place of fear—'*amor tollit timorem*'. That love drives the demoniac beings from the church, which now renounces its crypt-like character for good. The church now feels within itself a glorious mystical all-pervading sense of light and turns itself into God's abode of light, a picture of Heaven upon earth on which every human sense may feast.[1] The terrible Wheel of Destiny is transformed into a restful but radiant symbol of Christ, the sun.

BOSCH AND THE KINGDOM OF HELL

In the Romanesque the demoniac world had really not yet achieved a separate life of its own. It is only in the Gothic that light and darkness are divided and the cathedral indirectly brings into being as polar opposite to the Heavenly Kingdom, which is shown forth in itself, a Kingdom of Hell, though this last remains essentially a subordinate thing. Then as the representational art of the late Middle Ages develops, we begin to get painted representations of Hell. The culminating point of this development is to be found in Hieronymus Bosch, who flourished between 1480 and 1516.[2]

Bosch, a contemporary and actual co-eval of Leonardo da Vinci, created the world of Hell as a kind of chaotic counterpart to the new cosmic art of the High Renaissance, and what is entirely new about Bosch's infernal world is that it has its own creative principle, its own chaotic 'structure', its own formal laws, and it is really these that make it into a true counterworld to the worlds of Heaven and earth. It is only since Bosch that we have anything like a picture of Hell made visible.

There is definite novelty in the very shapes of these creatures from Hell. They are not 'fallen children of men, who by a simple process of metamorphosis have been turned into beasts of the Devil', but wholly independent and as yet unknown forms of life, born of the marriage of every conceivable kind of creature, fish, beast, bird, witch and mandrake, the products of a kind of ungoverned cosmic lewdness and debauchery, in which even lifeless things can mingle with the living. All this was something that lay wholly outside the horizons of antiquity.

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[1] Cf. H. Sedlmayr, 'Die dichterische Wurzel der Kathedrale', in the 14th supplementary volume of the *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Institutes für Geschichtsforschung* (1939).

[2] K. Tolnay, 'Hieronymus Bosch', unprinted Vienna dissertation, 1925; H. Schwarz, 'Die Säkularisation der Hölle', in *Wort und Wahrheit* (1947), Vol. 2.

New also is the actual scenery of Hell, and we see aspects of the face of this earth which had never before been put on canvas. We see here dark gulfs, empty stretches of earth and sea that seem to tell us how utterly God has forsaken them, the desolation of empty cities, strange hideous places whose vegetation are gallows-trees and wheels of torture, slime and morass. Here are neither sun nor moon, such light as there is comes from vast conflagrations or from the irridescence of strange phosphorescent shapes. Hell can show us the work of human hands, but it is distorted, arid in decay. Above all we see ruins, we see them continually—and in Hell there are also arsenals, a fighting equipment of strange machines, pieces of apparatus that are often meaningless, though sometimes they have a meaning, being instruments of torture, while through the air sail airships, demon manned and demon piloted.

The subjects of these paintings are hollow or of a kind of fleeting and unstable substance, they have the effect—and that effect is undoubtedly intentional—of empty things, masks and phantoms that may positively be said to usurp the character of the reality which they assume. There is an analogous character in the structure of the painting itself. There is nothing solid about it. There is no unity of proportion or perspective. The composition has the effect of something scattered and even dismembered, and the impression produced upon the beholder is that of an oppressive hallucination, or, alternatively, of a nightmare that ferments the mind by very reason of the fact that its symbols conceal a 'coded' meaning.

The vital principle behind this world, the positive and creative element within, is the denial of the human, the denial of the natural, the denial of reason and, in its consistent and vehement antagonism to order as such, it is the law of chaos absolute, the chaos of the abyss.

Now it would be quite wrong to see in all this nothing more than the grim quirks of grotesque and whimsical imagination. Bosch's phantasmagoria is something very different from that. It arises from a profound experience of a world that has renounced God, an experience whose very vividness casts a spell over the mind. The result is a visible physiology of Hell, which in Bruegel's painting '*De Dulle Griet*', a painting conceived wholly in Bosch's manner, is seen to be nothing other than the world of madness itself.

The matter, however, goes somewhat further, for as in the work of Van Eyck Heaven was projected into the earthly world and the earth was hallowed and transfigured into Eden, so here Hell overflows the boundaries of its own. It breaks into the realm of earth and permeates everything with disorder and decay. It is not that Hell's fiends actually appear on the earthly scene but that the very substance of the earth is rendered diabolical. 'In place of its former glory there is now merely a desecrated land, and its sometime innocence is replaced by the hideous and bewitched landscape of an evil dream.' The world that was man's home has become a world utterly strange and horrible.

But the Kingdom of Hell seizes upon even Paradise and creates here a demoniac caricature in the *Paradisus Voluptatis*. Fraenger has interpreted this so-called 'third paradise' as a picture of the 'thousand year kingdom' as a devotional picture of the rest of the 'free spirits' and of the programme of their Adamite creed, and has looked on Bosch as the instrument of its Grand Master. There is much to support this view.

So long, however, as the world of Christian belief remained an effective reality, the outlook behind such painting must be interpreted as a vision of temptation. The picturing of Hell therefore remained to some extent hemmed in by Christian orthodoxy and it was thus only to be expected that it should attain its full freedom and develop its most extreme forms when art has finally left the Christian world behind it. It is, therefore, wholly logical that Hieronymus Bosch should have been rediscovered in the twentieth century and should have become one of the original parents of Surrealism.

MANNERISM AND THE NEARNESS OF DEATH

Other individual characteristics of modern art appear in the movement of reaction against the classical art of the High Renaissance (1470–1520). It is only around 1590 that it is superseded by the Early Baroque which has a direct link with the High Renaissance itself and leads on to the High and Late Baroque. The anti-classical art of 1520–1590, alongside of which there also exists a late Renaissance phase, is today known by a name that, like the terms 'Gothic' and 'Baroque', originally had a depreciatory meaning. It is called 'Mannerism' to denote a certain quality of affectation by which it is so strongly marked.[1] A stone-like quality is imparted to human bodies, they seem deficient in blood. The painter prefers to show 'armour rather than the body, a mask instead of a face'. The figures are marked by a certain proud distinction and reticence and have a certain enigmatic quality and an air of deadly earnest.

When Mannerism is spoken of as anti-classical, it must be borne in mind that it cleaves to the whole formal apparatus of classical art; it is only the spirit that dominates it that is different. It is easiest to understand the phenomena of Mannerism if one tries to recapture its feeling for the quality of life as a whole. Here we find doubt, inner conflict and anxiety, and profound and intimate relationship to death.

This is the point where it has something in common with modern art. Its most characteristic feature is the quality of strangeness that it imparts to the classical form, so that this form becomes stiff, cold and dead. Mannerism searches for the smooth, the rigid and the dead, not for the form created by a true organic life, but for the form imposed from the outside, for the formal and ceremonial as such. Everything becomes a matter of formulæ, ingenious but wholly lacking in vitality. There is a preference for materials that are dead, cold and hard—rock-crystal, for instance

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[1] There is today a voluminous literature of Mannerism. For an introduction to the subject, see W. Pinder, 'Zur Physiognomik des Manierismus', in *Festschrift für Ludwig Klages* (1932); Ernst Gombrich, 'Zum Werke Giulio Romanos', in *Jahrbuch für Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen*, Vienna, New Series, Vol. VIII (1934); H. Sedlmayr, 'Die "Macchia" Bruegels', *ibid.*; Hans Hofmann, *Hochrenaissance Manierismus, Frübarock* (Zürich-Leipzig, 1938).

—and the colours that are preferred are those that are chalky, stony and metallic. There is a marked preference for black.

In architecture there is a marked preference for artificiality, for slender, stretched and tortured forms—there is here an affinity with certain examples of the late Gothic dated approximately 1525, those, for instance, in which the rib structure has the appearance of having been broken and then patched together again, cut into and disturbed in its design. Mannerism, incidentally, provides the first example of a painter portraying himself in a mirror which distorts his features.

Mannerism has the habit of patching a picture together out of various bits of reality and out of figures of different sizes, and of mingling classical forms with others, such as the Gothic. Its feeling for antiquity is the feeling a man has for something dead, a world of shreds and fragments. It produced the patchwork picture and has a number of other affinities to modern art. At the end of the era, for instance, Arcimboldi painted human heads composed entirely of sea-shells or pieces of vegetables, thus producing an entirely Surrealist effect.

The deeper relationship, however, between Mannerism and modern art lies in their sense of the nearness of death and in the divorce that appears in it between man and nature. Organic nature, as far as the mannerists are concerned, ceases to have relevance or interest. As for the great spiritual upheavals of the age, the Mannerists turned from this into their own world of artifice. A profound fear of the world, a profound fear of life itself appears in much of their work. The internal cohesion of their painting becomes precarious and in this painting there is a noticeable exaggeration of the dimension of depth, this last producing a curiously oppressive effect upon the mind.

Even so Mannerism is a highly spiritual and intellectual development of art. Mannerism, which sought to justify itself by pointing to certain features in Michelangelo's later work—though the latter really had nothing in common with it[1]—spread very rapidly throughout Europe, much more rapidly indeed than the Renaissance itself. In Italy its principal centre was not Rome—as was the case with the High Renaissance and the Baroque—but Florence. Sociologically it is essentially the art of the princely courts, the art of a refined, intensely sophisticated, but also morbid world.

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[1] Cf. H. Sedlmayr, *Über Michelangelo: Versuch über die Ursprünge seiner Kunst* (Munich, 1940).

All this helps to explain why it was precisely in the twenties of the twentieth century that the values embodied in Mannerism were rediscovered. Modern art thereupon began to an increasing degree to recognize Mannerism as its own forerunner and example. The exhibition of French Mannerist painting in the Albertina in Vienna in 1946, under the title '*Französische Phantastik*' (The fantastic element in French art), was not only intended to bring the long-neglected anti-classical phase of French art before the public, but also to legitimize the absurdities of the most modern French painting by tracing its descent to such distinguished forebears.

Mannerism has today been the subject of the most modern methods of research. It is therefore one of the best understood phenomena in the history of art; it is also one of the most overrated. Pinder's assertion that it lacks the real quality of genius is no more than the simple truth. Tintoretto and El Greco show Mannerist elements, it is true, but they are no more than that. Neither painter really belongs to the Mannerists as they are here defined—the Mannerists, in any case, never got a real foothold in Venice—but to a kind of 'spiritual' school, essentially religious, a thing that appears in the transition stage between Mannerism and the Baroque. Mannerism was much too artificial a thing to have any real feeling for religion, or indeed to have any relation to it save that of cold calculation.

The appearance in the sixteenth century of such a phenomenon as Mannerism is, for the purposes of this enquiry, a matter of very great importance. The assumption has so often been made that all the conditions that gave birth to modern art were essentially the product of large-scale urban civilization. The mere existence of Mannerism disproves that, since we find here certain unmistakably characteristic symptoms of the modern disease some three or four centuries before our moderns were ever heard of.

From the point of view of the history of culture, Mannerism still requires much explanation. Why it appeared precisely when it did and why it ended precisely when it did we do not know. The matter might well repay further study.

BRUEGEL AND THE DEGRADATION OF MAN

The word 'Mannerism' is being increasingly used as a general label for all the styles in the mid-sixteenth century. People have, therefore, tended to classify the art of Bruegel under this head. Yet this cannot really be done, and indeed the depth and splendour of Bruegel's feeling for earth and nature should prevent us from even attempting it. The same applies to Bruegel's sense of humour. Mannerism is merely unnatural. Humour is a quality of which it is wholly innocent. Moreover, Bruegel's subjects are entirely different.

Even so, Bruegel not only has certain formal elements in common with the Mannerists but also the dichotomous structure of the picture, which in his case becomes the pictorial formula for the dichotomy between man and nature. The deeper significance of his art began to be recognized at the same time as that of Mannerism, and since then the value set on his work and the recognition of its historic importance have been steadily growing.[1]

In Bruegel's work there appears another dominant theme of modern art, the depreciation of man. Man is looked at from the outside; as something distasteful and strange, much as we might regard creatures of another planet. Seen thus men appear base, unlovely and perverse, clumsy, inane and absurd—creatures in fact possessing every quality capable of exciting contempt, and this is true not only of the peasant, of whom the late Middle Ages tended rather to take this view, but of man in general. In the art of Bruegel several undercurrents of medieval art unite to form a new picture of man, one which represents him as the very antithesis and negation of holiness, greatness, nobility and wisdom.

The world of man, the world in which he must act and live, is a world in which all is done wrong, a world of chaos and wholly without meaning. Lurking about him everywhere are the creatures of Hell. Death and madness lie in wait all around him. It is moreover a matter worthy of especial note that Bruegel pays such particular attention to the things which are the special preoccupation of modern psychology and the modern mind in general, for his interest is drawn in a remarkable manner, not towards the peasant alone (the analogy here is with our contemporary concern with the primitive), but to children, half-wits, cripples, epileptics, to the victims of blindness and intoxication, to the mass and to apes. Even quite ordinary things have a spell cast over them that make them look strange to the point of being unintelligible—much as Bruegel's Beekeepers look like walking tree-trunks—so that a game played by children looks like some weird new manifestation of lunacy.

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[1] Cf. H. Sedlmayr, 'Die "Macchia" Bruegels', in *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen*, Vienna, New Series, Vol. VIII (1934).

In contrast with man, nature is unbroken and incorrupt. Nature is great and its own great life is at work within it so that one part passes organically over into another. Nature is full of wonders great and small. She is great in the never ending procession of the seasons, infinitely sublime when set over against man in his crawling ant-heaps, and yet, despite its majesty, despite the terror it can inspire, nature is a friendly, known and familiar thing. It is man that is unnatural.

In Bruegel this conception of humanity has its roots in the Protestant view of man. Man is seen first and all the time as a fallen creature. Man is not deliberately wicked, yet he is a kind of personification of all the vices, of sloth, cowardice, gluttony and greed, and he is swollen with imbecile pride. He has lost his native dignity, he is no longer sublime, but has become a clod, incapable of rising by any effort of his own.

Yet Bruegel has a note which the Catholic must definitely regard as heretical, and this too derives from Protestantism, for he denies the fallen state of nature. Nature is still in tune with the eternal order, it is only on man and the world of man that disorder has seized. The early nineteenth-century Romantics were to feel much the same way. They were to feel the landscapes of nature as things untouched by the fall, things still wholly pure.

Here indeed is the first great difference between the outlook of Bruegel and that of the late nineteenth and twentieth century, for here the fall of man casts its influence upon nature. An even greater point of difference is that Bruegel, although he sees man in all his baseness which he refuses at any time to hide or deny, yet he is not without a certain sympathy for the creature. With shame and even with despair he sets him before us, a tragi-comic creature, and yet he feels for him and his laughter is not wholly unkind.

There are certain historical connections between Bosch, Bruegel and the Mannerists, those three anticipators of modern art—anticipators in so far as they set the precedent for the appearance in art of Hell, of man become alien to his true nature and of death. Bruegel started where Bosch left off, and indeed was recognized as a kind of second Bosch by the more sharp-sighted of his contemporaries. In some of his works, such as the 'Fall of the Angels', 'The Wages of Sin' and 'The Triumph of Death', he carries on Bosch's line, and in the '*Dulle Griet*' the most superb portrayal of sheer madness that ever was conceived, may well be said to have surpassed his master. The connection, such as it is, between Bosch and the Mannerists has already been made plain.

The time from 1510 till about 1590 seems therefore to have been untouched by the great positive outlook of the Renaissance and its glad acceptance of life. Rather does it show us the reverse side of the optimistic picture of man which the Renaissance produced—and this may well be said to point to the existence of great and all-embracing spiritual crises.

SUMMARY

This brief glance at the past makes it clear that what was to become a general disease in the nineteenth century was coming gradually into being right through the development of the West and at various times overtly showed certain of its symptoms. These times we can now see were periods of tremendous spiritual crisis, affecting our whole civilization, such as that of the breach between *Imperium* and *Sacerdotium* (the conflict for investitures) and that following the Reformation,[1] though what was the precise causal connection between these different crises and the phenomena here described is not yet fully apparent.

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[1] Cf. Eugen Rosenstock, *Die europäischen Revolutionen* (Jena, 1931).

In this connection it is moreover essential to note that the forerunners of modern art appear in movements and in areas that are spiritually antagonistic to the Renaissance. In the light of these various observations the accusation which is so often and so lightly made that the evil of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had its origin in the Renaissance would seem to lose much of its substance.

Of all the phenomena in question Mannerism seems to be the most enigmatic. It cannot be related to the events of the Reformation; on the other hand, it is extremely difficult to explain it in sociological terms, for those very sections of society which gave it their support became violently anti-Mannerist with the arrival of the Baroque.

XI

THE THREE ARTISTIC REVOLUTIONS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

NONE of the older phenomena discussed up till now can actually be considered as having helped to call modern art into being, even if to some extent they foreshadow it. It is only since the beginning of the eighteenth century that we can trace an uninterrupted development of the new movement.

In regard to art it is natural to regard the reaction from the Baroque as the real motive power behind the eighteenth-century revolution, and that same reaction to the Baroque was certainly the determining factor of many important features, not of act alone, but of religion and of the general view taken of man and of the world.[1] Indeed, it seems at first sight that we actually have here a classic case of the dialectics of history, of evolution by contradiction.

On closer examination, however, it appears that the historical process is far more complex than such a simple formula might lead us to suppose. Admittedly the part played by the reaction to the Baroque is in the last resort decisive, but that reaction takes a number of forms, of which a very rough analysis can distinguish three, one following upon the other.

1. The phenomenon that is very imperfectly described by the term 'Rococo'.
2. The English 'bloodless' revolution.
3. The French Revolution proper and the phenomena, such as Goya, that are in a sense its corollaries.

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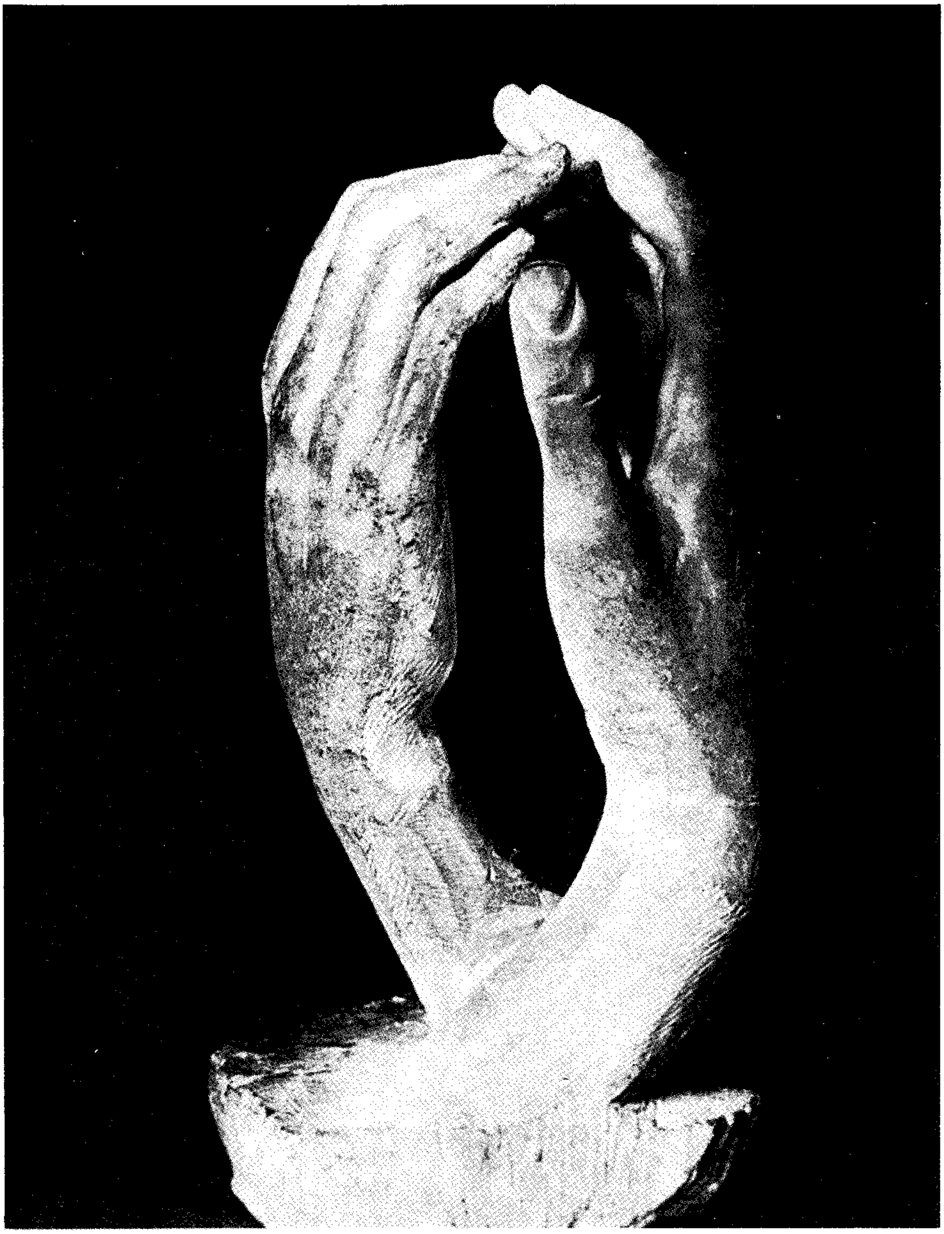
[1] Cf. below the definition of the Baroque in Chapter XV.

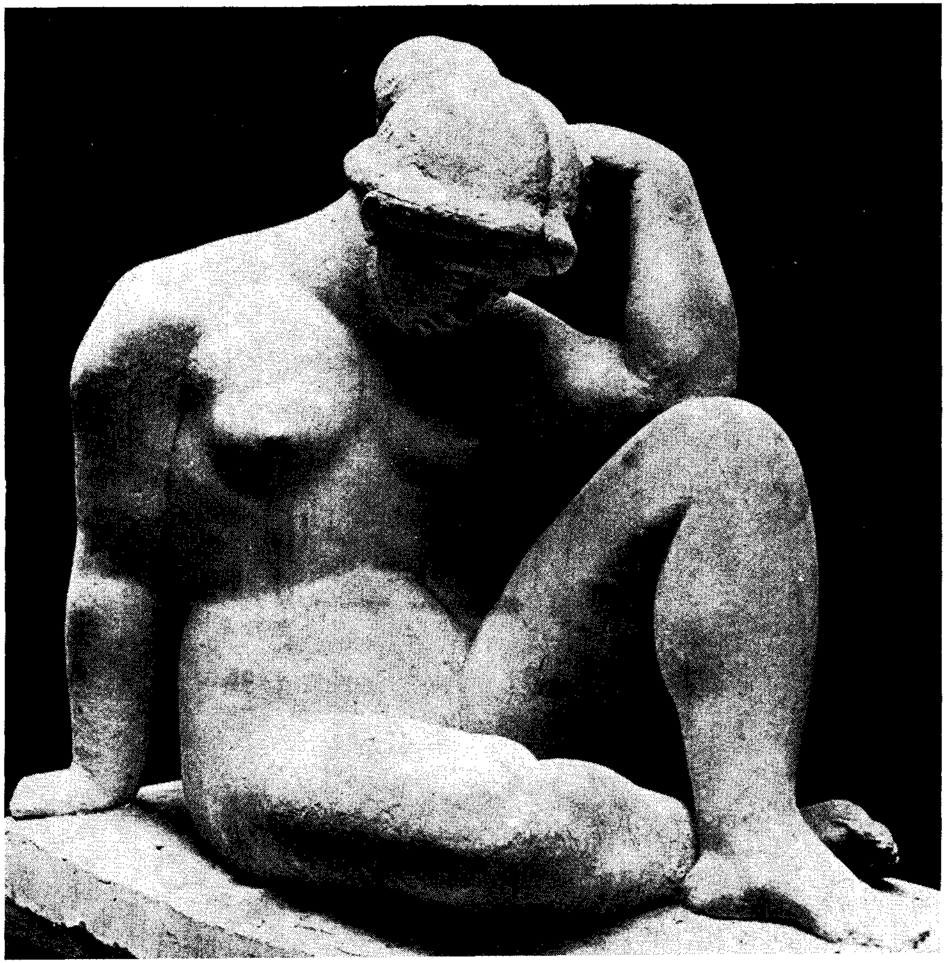


RODIN: THE CATHEDRAL

' . . . the artist's task is to create unity out of disparate objects and to create a world out of the smallest part of an object.' *Rilke.* (*See page* 114.)

MAILLOL: RECLINING FIGURE

'It is sculpture that carries the architectonic idea through the insecurities of our time.' (*See page* 113.)



ROCOCO

The Rococo is among the least understood epochs in the history of art and is in fact a historical phenomenon of unusual complexity. The Rococo, in the strict and narrow sense of the term, is a purely French thing. What is called Rococo in Germany is either imported from France, as at the courts with French alliances, such as Bavaria and Prussia, or late Baroque with some Rococo features.

In France, however, the Rococo proper—'style Louis XV'—is itself only the middle phase of a group of styles covering three generations: Régence, Rococo and early Louis XVI (so-called *style 'Pompadour'*). These three styles form a closed historic entity, a thing that is wholly *sui generis*, standing between the heavy public Baroque classicism of Louis XIV and the new emotionally dramatic idiom of the French Revolution. Actually the names of reigns only coincide very loosely with the different phases, since Régence sets in as early as 1700, ending about 1725, the Rococo proper covers only part of Louis XV's reign, for it continues only up to 1750, while what is known as Louis XVI actually begins late in the reign of that monarch's predecessor.

The three phases can be clearly distinguished from one another. In architecture the significant names are Oppenordt (born 1672), Meissonier (born 1695) and J. A. Gabriel (born 1698), while in painting, where the distinctions are even more marked, they are Watteau (born 1684), Boucher (born 1703) and Fragonard (born 1732).

This trinity, of Régence, Rococo and Louis XVI, stands on the whole quite unequivocally for the rejection of something essential to the Baroque, namely the idea of the 'great' man. This can, to some extent, be seen in the fact that the composite work of art of this epoch is no longer the great royal palace, let alone the church, but the relatively small and intimate town palace, and that the iconology of such an edifice has moved away entirely from the old grandeur of theme. It is in fact concerned with the small, the playful and the idyllically amorous. Indeed, in the Régence, in the work of Watteau, antique iconology disappears for a time altogether—in its way a most astonishing thing; and in other painters of the period its central theme is not Hercules or Apollo but Venus and Cupid. Actually, we find at this time something that might well be called an Aphrodisiac cult with sacrilegious 'orders' and cult centres.[1] The ever-recurrent figure of Cupid, carving his bow out of the club of Hercules, is the symbol in which the age finds its own true reflection. In portraiture it is not difficult to follow the gradual transformation, stage by stage, to a picture of man distinguished by a certain daintiness but by very little else. Delicacy, exquisiteness, sophistication, luxury and frivolity are the cardinal values of the period. Behind these, however, the basic feeling about life is one of cold scepticism tinged by melancholy.

Even so the epoch as a whole does not break the great continuity extending on the Continent from the High Renaissance to the Revolution. In the Régence and the Rococo it is still capable of producing splendid ornament, an ornament behind which lies obvious intensity of feeling, and in the early Louis XVI phase, one that in freshness and purity recalls the early Renaissance; but behind all this there is already a cooling in the vital warmth of architecture, and indeed the great entity which is the Baroque begins now to break up from within.

This last can be seen clearly if we examine the Rococo at all closely. In the Rococo any idea of greatness in man is already being weakened by irony, and there are signs of man's becoming divided into a rational part and one that is irrational and instinctive. In art one of the most important developments is a kind of divorce between an architecture that is intensely rational and a completely irrational ornament—all of which seems to be a prelude to that polarization in art that was yet to come.

There is thus a certain soundness in the judgement that the disturbance which we are endeavouring to explain had its origin in France[2] around 1700, even though as yet it can only be very indirectly perceived, for at this stage none of its symptoms is overtly visible.

[1] Cf. M. Eisenstadt, *Watteaus 'fêtes galantes'* (Berlin, 1930).

[2] Paul Hazard, *European Thought in The Eighteenth Century* (Hollis and Carter, 1954).

ENGLAND'S RÔLE

In the last phase of this 'inner' revolution, early in the Louis XVI period, the ground was being prepared for the invasion of Europe by English influence.

The year 1763, the year of the peace treaty that laid the foundations of the British Empire, is almost the precise point of time when England, for the first time in her history, began to become the Continent's model in matters of art and culture. This has long been recognized in the matter of the English garden, but it also applies in a much wider sense,[1] for the whole range of the sentimental is of English extraction—the sentimental garden, the sentimental portrait, the sentimental *genre*-painting, the sentimental drama, the sentimental journey, the sentimental novel, excursion and letter.

From England came the architecture of bare planes and applied ornament, the Greek revival, the Gothic revival and the phenomenon of architectural pluralism. From England also came the new style of the domestic interior and the way of life that went along with it. It was also England that produced the architecture of iron.

From England comes the conventional portrait of the time, as also the caricature with its denigration of man, for caricature had already assumed its more gross forms under Hogarth (1697–1764), as in the sphere of literature it had already assumed them under Swift (1667–1745).

From England comes Flaxman's pure line drawing, and also the impressionist painting of Constable and Turner. From England comes spiritualism: Flaxman (1755–1826), Füssli, Blake (1757–1828), and from England comes the new cult of the practical, expressing itself even in such matters as dress. It is England that produced the type of the early industrial landscape, alongside of its landscape gardens, and it is, above all, from England that the world received the new philosophy of Deism and Pantheism.

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[1] England's influence on Louis XVI architecture was most usefully examined by Fiske Kimball in the *Gazette des Beaux Arts* (1931), pp. 27 ff. The influence, however, went deeper than is there indicated and can be traced even in the work of Ledoux.

As France is for the Gothic, and Italy for the Renaissance-Baroque, so England is the classical country for the early nineteenth century—in art as in other things.

In France and Germany the English invasion began as early as the sixties of the eighteenth century, and until 1790 hardly anyone thought of seriously disputing its hegemony. Nevertheless, English ideas continued to be widely effective only till about 1840. The historical influence deriving from the new iron construction is the one thing that has continued uninterruptedly till the present day.

FRENCH REVOLUTION

Yet, if we except the landscape garden, it is not England, but, once again, France that produces the radically new ideas, the ideas that point the way to the future. It is only when France takes a hand that the reaction against the Baroque becomes extreme and uncompromising. It is France alone that draws the ultimate ruthless inference from the equation of architecture with geometry, an inference that was to determine the character of an entire age. There is, however, one department in which France is not the motive force, for it is in Goya, that lonely antagonist of reason, that we must seek the prototype of modern painting. As to England, she took no part in any of these developments.

SUMMARY

We see then that the process which we have been endeavouring to study begins to operate in France about 1700. It also begins to operate in England, though in a somewhat different form. It is only after it has developed independently to a certain point in France—to be precise, during the phase of Louis XVI—that England, where a very old and consistent proclivity has begun to bear fruit, begins to mingle its influence with that of France. Then from 1760 to 1790 English influence becomes paramount on the Continent, but it is the French Revolution that draws the ultimate conclusions from English premises.

In the phase of the Régence, Rococo and Louis XVI, France had prepared the ground for the revolution. It was England that introduced it, while revolutionary France and Spain carried it out —though it would be more accurate to speak not of Spain but of Goya, for it is no mere chance that painting, that was to become the most subjective of the arts, must now find its champion in the individual genius of one solitary man.

The beginnings of radical Deism and Pantheism come largely from England (though there the thing is kept under control), as, for that matter, do the original beginnings of the movement towards autonomy in the arts.

XII

FROM THE LIBERATION OF ART TO THE NEGATION OF ART

ONCE the 'signature' of the age has been recognized, there is little difficulty in following the main lines of the disease's course, despite certain things that cut across and conceal it. The development of art in this century and a half begins with the establishment of the new extremes. There follow certain attempts to moderate those extremes, to trap and render them innocuous and force them into the subconscious. From there, however, they break forth with greater vehemence than ever, whereupon the attempt to neutralize them is repeated, though with weakened forces. The best way of getting a view of what really happened, however, is to see it as a kind of parallel to the sociopolitical revolutions and to the reactions that follow them.

At the beginning of the process we find men giving shape to the 'new gods' in art, nature in its twin aspects of everlastingly being and becoming, and the demons (Goya)—in a word the new Heaven and the new Hell. This epoch really provides the key to an understanding of the whole course of events down to the present day, and it cannot be studied with too much care.

As a reaction against the terrifyingly sublime inhumanity of the new moods of art there is a return to the epochs whose spirit lies closer to that of man. The first step is to call for aid from the Greeks, with their intense sense of human loveliness. There is, however, also an appeal to the Gothic as the epoch which *par excellence* held the balance between nature and the supernatural. Neither produces what is expected of it. What follows is the escape into the humdrum present, into the less heroic sides of the human—the Biedermeier has relevance here. Then follows the restoration of the idea of the 'great man' in a return to the Renaissance. Once more divinity is claimed for art.

There is, however, already a concealed drift towards the extra-human, a drift which shows no signs of weakening. It now breaks out when architecture frees itself from anthropomorphic fetters and takes on the character of an engineering job. 'Man and nature are being driven out of art.' A disguise of this basic reality is then attempted by means of a humanist mask—in a word, there is an attempt at a humanist alibi. This is where we are today.

The process, like the social revolution itself, has two culminating-points, the first and second revolutions. In the first there is conscious effort to realize the sublime, and also to free the arts, all the arts, from 'heteronomous' fetters. There is an effort to exalt both man and art onto the highest possible level. The tendencies that would seek to lower the status of either are still in a minority. In the second revolution this position is reversed—and yet there is a profound connection between these apparently contradictory trends. The second revolution was prepared within the first. During the second revolution, nay, while it was actually being prepared, there is already a shift from preoccupation with the inorganic to preoccupation with the merely chaotic. The latter trend actually becomes dominant under Surrealism, and we come to a point where art itself is denied. The great and noble qualities that exercise a hold over our minds in the first half of the nineteenth century are by no means a mere residual legacy of the eighteenth century. It is the first revolution[1] that has produced them, but that revolution cannot maintain its essentially human standard—and it is precisely here that we see the workings of an inner law. The postulated autonomy of art and of the arts is the inevitable prelude to their disintegration.

THE COURSE OF THE DISEASE

It will help us to survey the course of events from 1770 onwards, not in historical but in human and psychological terms, as though we were dealing with the disease of an individual. It is then possible to speak of two phases when the disease may be said to

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[1] That the first revolution was a vigorous and formative thing is undeniable.

'flare up'. The first of these phases is from about 1770 to 1800. It is a vehement flare-up and remains acute till about 1830. Another and much weaker crisis round about 1830 I propose to pass over. Around 1900 there is a violent flare-up which had actually been preparing since 1885 and lasted till 1930. Between the two points of crises there are two periods of improvement—giving us four phases in all.

FIRST PHASE (1770–1830)

The essential impression from a survey of the whole body of art is that its manifestations are acquiring a certain coldness. This is precisely what people normally mean by classicism. There is a lack of life about it and a repudiation of the sensual. People become allergic to movement and the dynamic aspects of colour. The dominant mood is one of a quiet melancholy and even of mournfulness.[1] 'The patient weeps a great deal.' It is an age that is severe with itself and one of high æsthetic and ethical ideals. Men turn their thoughts very much towards the past, towards the purity of a lost youth for which they have a nostalgic longing, or they make mental excursions into some utopian future upon earth. Preoccupation with the transient nature of earthly things and with death reaches its climax about 1800. There is a profound sense of the nocturnal aspect of life, of nature and antiquity and of the cthonic powers. The symbol of the age is the moon—its light beautiful, clear and cool, but not its own and without power to warm or call life into being—the classicism of this phase could not be more succinctly described.

Peripherally there are symptoms that seem in diametrical contradiction with all this—doubts as to the dignity and true nature of man, possession by terrible and tormenting dreams and visions (Goya and Füssli); there is also preoccupation with the spirit world. Thus does Chaos press towards the surface.

In general there is much conflict between a rigorous super-ego embodied in 'the moral law within us' and our wild chaotic impulses.

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[1] For further discussion in terms of cultural history, cf. the article by W. Rehm, 'Götterstille und Göttertrauer', in *Jahrbuch des freien deutschen Hochstifts* (Frankfurt am Main, 1924).

SECOND PHASE (1830–1840)

Thought turns away from the past, towards the present. It has less concern with greatness and power and seeks refuge in little familiar things. There is an adjustment to reality and men in the main seek for no more than what lies within their reach.

The spiritual mood is one of resignation and of quiet, slightly sentimental cheerfulness. It is the culminating-point of European humour.

Deeply concealed beneath all this and to some extent diverted into certain specific forms of expression, such as caricature, there is a secret demoniac element (Daumier, Blechen).[1]

THIRD PHASE (1840–1885)

A state of stiffness and sterility which has recently characterized the patient gives place to an apparent return to health, so that only a sharp eye can still detect the malady.

Appearances indicate that the state existing before the onset of the disease has been successfully restored. The senses resume their rightful place, colour and movement come back into their own. Outwardly there is much show of activity. Men now have a relation to the age in which they live that is positive—a very different thing from that division of 1800 between a sense of being lost and a futurist Utopianism. People believe in progress, in the possibility of improving their condition and curing their ills.

There is or seems to be a hectic pleasure in sheer life, a thing with a Dionysiac quality, though this often has a forced air and seems to be somewhat consciously advertised. There is indeed something forced and histrionic in the whole age, as Nietzsche saw, and it serves to cover up much inward torment and unrest.

What we have here is a façade for a somewhat painful and laborious process that has been repressed into the subconscious. Even so since 1885 the process has betrayed its presence by a number of symptoms.

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[1] On 'The Demonic in Biedermeier' see the article by Hermann Pongs in *Dichtung und Volkstum* (1936). On Blechen see the relevant passage by H. Beenken, *Das 19. Jahrhundert in der deutschen Kunst* (Munich, 1944).

FOURTH PHASE (LATENT FROM 1885, OVERT SINCE 1900)

The world, man and nature become estranged from one another. The dominant emotions are fear and despair.

Artistic forms grow colder, and there is a tendency to disintegrate. There is an alternation of extreme conditions and a kind of schizoid condition. 'The patient no longer has any control over his thoughts.' He feels abandoned to demoniac powers. He is utterly unrestrained in speech, though he sometimes loses the power of speech altogether (Dadaism). As against this there is intense motor unrest, a continual urge to hurry and sense of being hurried. There is a continuous desire to change his condition and a lack of stability. The future is regarded with alternations of hopefulness and extreme despair.

THE AGENTS OF THE PROCESS

In this process the various nations play different parts. Those that shape the first phase are England, Northern Germany, and also, yes even at that date, America and Russia. The extreme side of this phase is represented by this art of the French Revolution, and also, it must be added, by Spain—with her Goya.

The main weight of the second phase is in Southern Germany and Austria.

The third, reactionary phase that led in the shaping of the late Baroque developed in Germany and France.

In the fourth phase England ceases to play any part. Although she brought the revolution about, she will have nothing to do with its final consequences. The leaders now are France, America, Germany and Russia—in painting French and German influence is paramount. Italy, who was the leader in the ages of the Baroque and the Renaissance, plays no decisive part in the whole affair and contributes relatively little to the movements in question (Italian Futurism).

Spain's rôle is particularly noteworthy. She provides the determining personality for three revolutionary movements in painting: Goya, Picasso and Dali. Spain, indeed, since the early Middle Ages has had something of a talent for the apocalyptic.

The North too now has its say: German art, with its tragic inner cleavage, suffers most of all.

Although, however, different regions have played distinctive parts, most of the movements in question have a global character. Even the classicism of 1760 to 1830 reacts as far as America and Australia, to all territories, in fact, where the white man is to be found. Modernism in building is equally universal and since 1900 has been accepted far outside Europe. It circles the entire world. Similarly Surrealism has its cells everywhere.

THE PRESENT

It may be a somewhat questionable proceeding to designate one's own age as the turning-point in the history of the world, nevertheless it is difficult to shake off the feeling that since 1900 a kind of limit has been reached and that we are faced by something wholly without precedent. Beyond this limit it is difficult to imagine anything except one of two things—total catastrophe or the beginnings of regeneration. What faces us does not seem to be one of those crises of which we have so often been disturbingly conscious—that very consciousness of crisis is itself a typical symptom of our times—it is the essential crisis of human existence, and up to this writing it has not yet been resolved.

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Part Three

TOWARDS A PROGNOSIS AND A FINAL JUDGEMENT

Human history takes the path towards the mechanical and the demonic, but it returns to the norms and then a new equilibrium is achieved.—ERNST JÜNGER.

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XIII

AN EVALUATION OF THE EPOCH

Il faut être de son temps.—DAUMIER.

TO speak of the conditions of our time as a disease is already to make an evaluation of them. By the very act of collating all these symptoms and applying to them a purely medical analogy, we have already pronounced our judgement.

Further, our diagnosis is in one respect only possible for a man who to some extent stands outside of his own age. The present situation can seem normal and satisfactory only to a man who is himself the victim of the conditions prevailing in it, one who believes in autonomous man and denies God.

Logical and honest materialists are quite ready to admit that the abolition of God brings with it the abolition of art as such. What they will not admit is that such a development must inevitably lead to the abolition of man, to the transformation of man into something subhuman, into a human machine, a robot or into the anarchic human atom which, however, could in actual fact not be called 'a-tom' at all, since it could be still further split and broken down. Most certainly man would ultimately thus be transformed into a demoniac. What such people do not see is that personality is intrinsic to man and that personality can only be defined as the image of God, and it is only by understanding it in that sense that we can really grasp what it means.

The battle we are at present witnessing is between two different conceptions of the essential nature of man, and this battle is drawing steadily nearer to a dramatic climax, for there is one thing that the study of art makes plain beyond any shadow of a doubt—indeed, art makes this plainer than does anything else—for the study of art shows us that wherever one may happen to stand the present state of affairs cannot possibly be regarded as normal, nor can these phenomena be interpreted, as Spengler contends, as the natural results of the ageing of a culture. We have before us a disease and all we can do is to argue about its structure and causes.

And yet, despite this diagnosis, the whole epoch cannot simply be condemned out of hand. First of all, an epoch does not consist merely of the dangers that happen to threaten it. There existed in the nineteenth century, and there still exists in the twentieth, a vast stock of soundness which, despite all the assaults made upon it, has by no means been used up; there are still large sections of society which have not yet fallen victims to the disease nor taken any particular hurt from it, even though they had hitherto proved themselves incapable of producing an antidote.

But there is a deeper reason why the epoch must not be summarily condemned: 'Behind every one of man's errors', wrote Johann Adam Möhler, 'is a great truth, there is some deeply rooted need of the human heart. Else it would be inexplicable that men should for generations, and even centuries, have been entrapped in such error.'[1] Nor will we have made ourselves masters of our age and be able completely to close the case, until the need expressed in all these aberrations has found a genuine, as distinct from an illusory satisfaction.

It would thus be the function of any real critique of the age—if that term is understood as the art of making distinctions—to supplement the exposure of the negative side by showing us the positive goal which those who followed these various wrong roads were trying to attain. Unfortunately the nature of that goal is far from clear.

It must not be forgotten that, as Von Einem says, 'even the denial of the spirit is a creative act of the spirit', and that atheism may actually indicate a clouded love of truth,[2] and a soulless egalitarianism a love of universal brotherhood that has contrived to get misdirected. Yes, perhaps more than one symptom in the domain of art represents the misinterpretation of a genuine need. That may well apply to the desire for purity and all similar examples of an over-radical rejection of compromise, it may apply to the craving for the aboriginal or for what is supposed to be aboriginal and all the rest. Even the visions of Hell by which the modern artist is so often tormented may be a form of deliberate self-torture imposed by his desire to regain God or by the lost and distorted conception of God, or by the lost and distorted conception of man. There may even be at the bottom of art's persistent tendency to escape into the dream-world a conception of the nature of art that is more profound than the academic or naïvely realistic idea of it, which the philistine invariably takes for granted.

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[1] Johann Adam Möhler, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Regensburg, 1839), Vol. I, p. 216.

[2] N. Berdyaev, *On Human Destiny*.

All these errors derive their strength from the circumstance that what they are battling with is really not the full truth at all, for these victims neither know that truth nor do they desire to know it. What they are setting themselves up against are obscured or distorted versions of the truth or mere fragments of it. Thus error and counter-error drive men further and further away from the mean.

By and large we can, as things are today, only very dimly perceive what is happening, yet it seems plain that all this mass of error really does represent an attempt to arrive at a more profound and comprehensive picture of man and God, and of God in man, and, perhaps most of all, at a truer picture of the First Person of the Godhead. The attempt naturally fails and the suppression of this spiritual need has led to deep and terrible experiences of death, chaos and of the demoniac—experiences which are themselves a challenge to man, to uplift order and cleanse both his world and himself.

All this in itself, however, shows how impossible it is to achieve salvation by a mere return to the past. That would make nonsense of our assumption that all these perversions are the expression of a genuine need of the soul. Attempts to regain the lost centre by reverting back to a bygone picture of man, or to overcome the inhuman quality of the age by a return to what we call 'humanism', may well be taken as evidence of our inward unrest but have little power to heal the ills from which we suffer. Such efforts merely suggest a man who seeks to hide some inward grief by the wearing of a fixed smile. That smile could only be a mask.

The æsthetic beauty that the genius of man achieves provides no cure for us, nor can the resort to it be more than a gesture. The longing for the halcyon days of the Biedermeier, for the 'good old days', the days in which we feel that in the midst of the new age men still kept their hold on human values, represents an evasion of the more difficult path, a substitution for the true mean of mere mediocrity, the *juste milieu*, it means an ignoring of the fact that even on this calm and placid isle there already yawned the abyss of inhumanity and nothingness.

Moreover, even the task of conserving what is still sound implies something other than a mere avoidance of the perils that threaten the thing to be conserved. The substance of that which has been handed down can only be preserved by constant renewal. Hegel's words on the power of the negative have peculiar relevance to our own age: 'Death, if we are to give this name to the unreality concerned, is the most terrible of things, and to hold on to what is dead is the task which demands more strength than any other. Beauty without power hates the spirit because it demands that from the spirit which it cannot perform. But it is not the life which fears death and protects itself against decay, that is the life of the spirit, rather is it that life which bears with death and preserves itself in the midst of it.'[1] These are words which can also be made to apply to the way of art throughout the nineteenth century.

Soloviev has a livelier view of the conservative task. The picture of man and of God in man must be carried through the storms of time, even if it appears to us distorted, in the firm faith that it will be transformed and renewed. 'If thou wilt be a man of the future, thou man of the present, then do not forget amid the smoking ruins thy father Anchises and thy native gods. A pious hero was needed in those days who would carry these to

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[1] Hegel, *Phenomenology of the Spirit.*

Italy, but to him and his kin, they only could be offered Italy and the dominion of the world. But our holiest thing is greater than Troy and our way leads further than to Italy and further than the whole circuit of the earth. The saviour saves himself. That is the secret of progress; there is no other and there never will be.'[1]

[1] V. Soloviev, *The Myth of Progress.*

XIV

TOWARDS AN EVALUATION OF MODERN ART

ARTISTIC STANDARDS

As the condition of a man can only be judged by comparison with some valid picture of man as such, so the condition of art—and this applies to art as a whole and to every individual work of art—can only be judged by being measured against some valid conception of what constitutes a work of art. Both the art critic and the art historian should be clear about this, each should have some well-grounded and even profound doctrine on the matter.

This is hardly the place to show which of the various current contending theories, overt and implied, possesses the largest element of truth. Much has, of course, become clear on the way, nor can there be any doubt that, like our teaching concerning the nature of man, our doctrine concerning the nature of art has made much progress and may indeed be said to have gained in profundity, but its findings have not yet penetrated the general consciousness of men, even of men of learning.[1]

What we must never lose sight of is that the true nature of art, like the true nature of man, is constant through the ages, no matter in how varied a form it may find expression. The dangers that surround it vary, of course, from one period to another, and are in each case connected with the peculiar tasks, whatever they may be, that it sets itself to fulfil.

It is this permanently valid standard by which we must measure the art of our own day, nor can we possibly form a just estimate of it by applying to it the canon of any particular age, though that is what so many people are always trying to do. Above all, art must not be judged by some supposed faithfulness to nature, some imaginary correctness of representation; indeed, the mistake of supposing that the art of all epochs imitates or 'stylizes' nature has long been recognized.

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[1] I endeavour to demonstrate this in an as yet unpublished work, *Zur Bestimmung des Kunstwerks*. Cf. also Th. Haecker, *Schönheit, Ein Versuch* (Leipzig, 1936).

Obviously where art is seeking to represent the supra-sensual world, of which we can have no experience by natural means, it would be meaningless to demand that the artist should be true to nature. What he must in such circumstances do is to reveal the realm of the supra-sensual by means of pictorial symbols of a special kind. It is also just as pointless to expect a work of art to correspond to normal reality when its subject is the world of dreams.

We cannot, therefore, possibly judge certain currents in nineteenth- and twentieth-century art by the art forms of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which did in some measure seek to be true to nature in their art, nor in so doing would we do justice to the very real achievements of this epoch, achievements the very greatness of which consists precisely in the development of new representational methods appropriate to the subjects of its choice, subjects for which till then there had been no precedent whatever.

This was a feat which should not be underrated. Indeed, as Von Einem says, we should admire the moral strength which enabled these artists to remain true to their artistic ideals rather than yield to the comfortable lures of an anti-artistic *Zeitgeist*, whose ideal was the coloured photograph. We can even speak of real artistic greatness, for is there not real greatness in the ability to raise things that are in themselves dead, chaotic and repulsive into the sphere of life, order, beauty and humour? Nor is the outstanding quality of these somewhat exceptional achievements diminished if we admit that the anthropomorphic epochs of world history, such as the Greek, the Gothic, the Renaissance and the Baroque, were quite particularly favoured in the matter of their art, and that the warm and vital connection between their human and their artistic values, values which in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were often in irreconcilable conflict, give them a special claim to excellence.

There is also this principle which in judging the nineteenth and twentieth centuries we must necessarily bear in mind. Works of art must not be judged by the nature of the thing they set out to represent. The idea that the representation of ugly things is inartistic in itself is a very ordinary philistine blunder, for the philistine cannot see that even what is ugly and terrible can be shown 'in the light of beauty'—as though Grünewald, Bosch and Bruegel had never put brush to canvas.

There is further a kind of parallel or cognate blunder, there is that 'dreadfully mediocre view that it is the function of art to turn prose into poetry, to make beautiful what is in itself ugly or indifferent, or worse still to conceal its ugliness'.

The fact is that art cannot be assessed by a measure that is purely artistic and nothing else. Indeed such a purely artistic measure, which ignored the human element, the element which alone gives arts its justification, would actually not be an artistic measure at all. It would merely be an æsthetic one, and actually the application of purely æsthetic standards is one of the peculiarly inhuman features of the age, for it proclaims by implication the autonomy of the work of art, an autonomy that has no regard to men—the principle of '*l'art pour l'art*'.

When you get as far as that, there is always the danger of art becoming anti-human and, on occasion, diabolic and nihilistic. Such art as this can hardly be distinguishable from the genuine article by æsthetic standards, the only guide being its utter lack of human relevance and human content.

This extra-human art has a dangerous fascination for the spirits of our own age, and as long as pleasure can still be found whose content is a negation of human nature, we must admit that we have before us a perversion that is serious and deeply rooted, for it is monstrous that we should admire a spirit that humiliates and torments the human soul under the guise of art when we can still resent such insult and humiliation of man in reality. Yet art in its extreme form seems something like the spoilt child of those wavering and uncertain humans who cry out loudly enough when the monstrous breaks out upon them, but are in certain circumstances still ready to toy with it. We may well recall

Stifter's words, uttered in 1847, 'Art knows only one mortal sin—the sin against the human soul's likeness to God.'

But that mortal sin is not one which the nineteenth and twentieth centuries consistently committed, even though they fell into it all too frequently, and it is precisely where, in the midst of all these new and unprecedented threats to man and his world, the concept of man is still fully preserved in its art that the peaks of nineteenth- and twentieth-century achievement are to be found. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in a word, are great and strong wherever they can sustain the tension between the newly opened continent of the extra-human—the 'wasteland'—and the inviolate concept of man.

The great geniuses of the age are those artists who did not shun and evade what was new and did not attempt to escape from the dangerous thing by retreating into the safety of their shells, or to mask this extra-human element which was thus thrust at with the hollow semblance of humanity. The great geniuses of the age were those who amidst all these afflictions of the soul, torn by temptation, haunted by the very terror of their own visions and often near to despair, still went forward and carried the image of man across the abyss. One great example is Daumier, another is Van Gogh.

Yet there were others, and we must in no way overlook those who are less conspicuous for their preservation of the human element, those in whom that element is a spark rather than a flame, and there were those, of course, who were downright traitors to man.

Actually art may already be considered to be in the decline when it explores certain marginal territories merely for the sake of such new stimulus as it may find there—merely for the sake of the interesting. We are continually coming across this cult of the interesting and it is one of the fundamental dangers of the age. We can see it very clearly if we compare the work of Caspar David Friedrich with that of Turner, both of whom belong to the same generation. Both men turn towards the elements, earth, air and sea, as to things which somehow convey the quality of the universe (*in ihren 'allhaften' Erscheinungsformen*). But in Friedrich's work this is combined with a profound feeling for man's relation to these same elements which is one of deep awe. Hence Friedrich's art is, in its human aspects, of a very high order despite a certain technical hardness. Turner's art, on the other hand, which from the technical point of view is on an incomparably higher level of virtuosity, lacks this most essential counterpoise. It often descends to the merely interesting, into something that is without inward or outward substance, or to mere theatrical fireworks. This maintaining of a human mean or centre in the midst of these new wide and empty horizons is the thing by which modern art must be judged. It is the criterion that we must apply to every artist and to every one of his works.

One more illustration can be given here: Kokoschka's painting of the skinned sheep. The objection to this picture is not that the things it portrays are unpleasant—the grisly carcase, the white mouse, the tortoise and the ghost of a hyacinth. It is not an unæsthetic picture—quite the contrary. Purely artistically the painting has much to recommend it, it has a high degree of inner consistency and compactness, and there is a profound harmony of colour and of form; it is, indeed, a quite uncanny 'symphony of decay'.

The objection to it is its lack of any relation to the human, its concentration on mere technical brilliance. To look at this picture is to be seduced into the realm of the morbid, and its danger lies in the very effectiveness of that seduction and of that 'savour of death' by which the enchantment succeeds.[1] Compared with it, Rembrandt's slaughtered pig is a positively religious picture.

If this particular picture still leaves room for argument, there are others about which there can be no argument whatever. In the work of Ensor, for instance, there is often something inhuman and even diabolic in the way the most exquisite formal taste combines with the most macabre and morbid of themes, there is something harrowing and also profoundly degenerate in the cold cynicism of Grosz's lithographs, pictures which not only pass merciless judgement on a decadent age, and on the living lie that it is, but seem to gleam with a perverse delight in mere decay —pictures in which the sparkle of malignant eyes seems somehow like an invitation to suicide.[1] And as Stifter knew long ago, there are also landscapes that are 'vicious', landscapes that are full of nihilism and death. The danger of all these inhuman manifestations in art stands in direct ratio to the skill of the artists concerned.

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[1] This judgement does not by any means apply to all of Kokoschka's work.

'There is plenty of sheer downright ability today,' says Jaspers, 'and triumphs of virtuosity are to be found in every field. When people say a thing is excellent or outstanding, they are often not using empty words. Yet all too often even the perfect thing is without a core. That core is lacking which in the past enabled even an inferior product to make some kind of appeal, and could even give this product a certain importance.'[2]

Since the nineteenth and twentieth centuries artists have been moving along a narrow ridge. On the one side there is the danger of a fall into the seductions of the unusual, the forced and the merely interesting—and none of that is art. On the other side there looms a beauty that is false, hollow and mere seeming—and that is not art either. It is given only to powerful spirits to travel this razor edge. Lesser ones lack the requisite inner certainty. That is why in the nineteenth century genius takes on a meaning quite different from that of previous centuries. Genius alone can bear the ever-increasing weight of the image of man through the dangers of the time.

Wilhelm Furtwängler has a passage which is worth quoting here: 'So the word genius, a concept which was formulated for the first time in the eighteenth century, begins to have a special ring of destiny for these our latter days. Genius for us has become an ineluctable necessity if we are to find the way back to ourselves.[3]

IN DEFENCE OF THE EXTREMISTS

Quae sursum sunt sapite

And yet justice must be done to the extremists as to anybody else, and if we are to do it, we must keep in mind the failure of the conservative movements that in the nineteenth century sustained or should have sustained the image of man in art.

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[1] Otto Mauer, *Kunst und Christentum* (Vienna, 1946). The above does not apply to Ill. 44.

[2] Karl Jaspers, *Die geistige Situation der Zeit* (Berlin–Leipzig, 1933).

[3] Wilhelm Furtwängler, 'Allgemeinverständlichkeit und Allgemeingültigkeit in der Kunst,' in *Geistige Überlieferung*, a yearbook published by Ernesto Grassi (Berlin, 1940).

'The good', says Berdyaev, 'itself became vulgarized and stale after its creative powers had deserted it. This staleness and flatness of the good calls forth a reaction, which recognizes and applauds the fact that evil has a sharper edge, a greater depth, and a stronger passion. It is assumed there is in evil an anti-toxin against that sheer baseness', which had no sense or awe for the transcendental at all and was stuck fast in its pedestrian complacency. 'One can often observe that movements that are borne along by hatred, movements which have somewhere within them the darker kind of passion and some sort of demoniac power, are more active, more intense, more interesting than those which derive their driving power from motives that are intrinsically good, but good with a goodness that has lost its salt, its creative energy, good with a goodness that has grown cold and flat. This sharp edge and intensity are to be felt in the upsurge of revolutionary movements, in the first clashes between classicists and Romantics, in the new movements in art.'[1]

Even so there is no foundation for the widespread belief that these new movements in art are gradually bringing a new religious art into being, nor can this seriously be entertained by anyone who looks at the facts. Undoubtedly, however, those movements constitute a spur towards making religious art 'flamingly creative, sharp and strong for spiritual battle'. Their claim to be an *avant-garde* is only made possible 'because, on the one hand, the orthodox movements of art have lost their fire, and, on the other, there are reactionary tendencies which are serving to propagate a banal self-satisfied and unspiritual pseudo-art'.

There is equally little substance in the argument that seeks to justify modern art on the grounds that in giving expression to the chaos of our time it is truthful. Of course, the contention that it does reflect what is present among us is sound enough, especially if we accept the distorted portrait of man which modern art gives us as 'realistic', as no doubt it is. A spiritual and moral portrait of man, it has been correctly said, really would look like a piece of sculpture by Epstein or Archipenko, or like a figure by Picasso or Dali; man has indeed lost his true measure and there is no longer any right relationship between the parts. 'Hypertrophy and atrophy mingle to form a hideous caricature' (G. Montesi).

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[1] N. Berdyaev, *On Human Destiny*.

But one could only accept this argument if one accepted the false thesis that art is or should be an expression of the time, and that this and nothing else is its true essence—a thesis that is itself simply a symptom of the kind of thought that is incapable of transcending time. Art is, of course, only incidentally the expression of the time, in its essence it is extra-temporal, it is the manifestation of the timeless, of the eternal. The denial of this eternal quality is essentially also a denial of art, and, as Goethe said, 'only the mediocre talent is always the captive of its time and must get its nourishment from the elements that time contains'. The work of the true artist does not issue from his time, it bursts the bonds of time, indeed that very thing is the definition of creativeness—however much the artist must use time—conditioned elements to create something new. The artist is, in fact, faced with the task of 'making the undisturbed supernatural order visible in images of the disturbed natural order' (J. Schöning).

That is the canon by which modern art must be measured, for there is no other. At best we can say with Nietzsche that the greatness of the artist must be measured 'by the certainty with which chaos obeys his commands', but the artist receives those commands not from an autonomous ego, but from above—and if not from there, then of course, like the falsely styled Surrealists, 'from below'.

XV

MODERN ART AS THE FOURTH PHASE OF WESTERN ART

We are at the end . . .—CHRISTIAN MORGENSTERN

THE character of modern art will be easier to understand if we compare it with other ages of that Western art from which it has grown and in which it must be rooted. For even modern art, with its predominant characteristics of chaos, will some day have the character of a closed epoch, though neither the time nor the nature of its end can yet be foreseen.

Looking at Western art as a whole we can best differentiate between its different epochs by grasping what was in each of them the purpose that art set out to serve. Viewing the matter from this angle we shall not regard stylistic features in the narrower sense of the term as the essential distinguishing marks, but will rather see those distinguishing marks in the presence or absence of great collective artistic tasks, in the birth and disappearance of certain categories of art, in the change in the beholder's attitude to art and so on.

Art has, of course, never changed its essential nature, but it has often changed its place in the context of human life as a whole, and it is this last that really signifies. Thus, for instance, those works of Western art that we call pictures vary so much in their aim and in the circumstances that brought them into being that a person who makes a really careful study of the subject will hesitate to classify them under a single word.[1] What makes a picture in a Romanesque church different from one in a Dutch burgher's house is not a difference of approach towards what may be an identical task, but the fact that the circumstances which brought it into being and the function it performs have changed, as has the very conception of what makes a picture into a picture at all. There is no point in looking at both with the same eyes, indeed we have not even a right to do so—a consideration which certainly applies to our habit of putting both into a museum or using them to adorn a single room, as though the nature of each were the same as that of the other. Strictly speaking, only certain classes of paintings—and they date back no further than the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries—have any place in a collection or museum.

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[1] I am here paraphrasing passages from the introductory pages of Ernst Buschor's book, *Vom Sinn der Griechischen Standbilder* (Berlin, 1948), in which the world pertaining to each work of art is described together with the work of art itself. This book is a model for the 'many layered' history of art of the picture.

Pictures in a collection or a museum can be regarded as segments cut out of nature or as exercises in composition or works of art pure and simple; paintings of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are particularly suitable to be so regarded, but it has taken a long time for the picture to have that peculiar significance which it possesses today.

The works of previous periods, and certain of those from much later periods as well, have behind them a generative impulse of an entirely different kind, one to which an age of art collectors and art dealers, of art experts and art historians cannot really do justice; for between long periods which are relatively consistent and homogeneous in this respect there come events which bring profound changes in their train, there come years, decades, and even centuries of upheaval, and in these the whole view of what art means to man undergoes a radical transformation.

Now in the high culture of the West we can distinguish four phases. Of these the two middle ones are closely connected owing to a certain affinity of the central themes.

FIRST PHASE: GOD—TEMPORAL RULE

PRE-ROMANESQUE AND ROMANESQUE (550–1150)

In the first phase men can conceive of no other purpose of art than the service of God. Art's exclusive task is the composite work of art which is the church. Even here Romanesque art differs from the Byzantine art of early Christianity. In the West the secular pole of art, which is devoted to the Emperor, is very largely drawn into the orbit of the church. In Byzantium, the church and the imperial palace confront each other as problems of equal inner value, despite the fact that the imperial palace is much larger than the church and sets the artist much more numerous and varied tasks, but wherever in the West we come across anything that lies outside the sphere of the church proper, whether it be in the territories of princes or in bishops' palaces, it is a mere fragment or reflex of ecclesiastical art.

As in Christian and Byzantine art, the sole subjects of art are the things that are not of this world. Buildings and pictures are equally sacramental in character, conveying symbolically—on the principle of 'dissimilar similarity'—the experience of something that in the last resort lies beyond experience. Man and nature are as it were elevated into that mystical condition where they already have a part in the next world.

The laws of pictorial representation are deduced from this principle. The two-dimensional is paramount and not in painting alone. 'It is also dominant in building and sculpture; it surrounds the stone, damming up its force, cloaking the pillar, covering the capital in a cluster of lozenges, mantling even the sculptured figure as with armour, like a tortoise in a solid shell,'[1] so that the sculptured figure becomes a relief flush with the different levels of the wall surface. The physical is not represented as though it were a reality of this world; there is neither sculpture in the round nor in painting any rendering of shadows, or of the true optical relations of the objects depicted; there is no perspective.

Western Romanesque differs from Eastern Christian art not only in the plan of its churches but also in its conceptions of matter and light and in the nature of the subjects chosen for its art. The main point of divergence, however, is in the evidence of a different conception of God.

The churches differ from the Byzantine and Early Christian in two particulars. One is the appearance of high towers, which replace the cupola and later turn the church into a kind of fortress of God, the actual size and height of the place all helping to suggest this. Another point of difference is the disappearance of the gold mosaic—which means the element of light has vanished from the wall. The wall becomes increasingly massive as in the architecture of very ancient civilizations, whereas in Early Christian and Byzantine art the wall is delicate and ethereal; it now consists of many layers, as can be clearly seen in the graduated doorway, and it is dull and earthy in colour. Interiors tend to be dark and crypt-like. The main sources of light are the candelabra, and in particular the great chandeliers over the altar. Crypts under the ground have an important part to play.

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[1] Th. Hetzer, 'Vom Plastischen in der Malerei', in *Festschrift für Wilhelm Pinder* (1938).

As in Eastern churches, God is represented in His divine aspect, Christ as the King and ruler of the world. But here, far more than in the Byzantine, we see the terrible side of the Godhead, and at the end of the epoch positively demoniac features begin to find a place in the image of the divine. The artists took a delight in portraying apocalyptic beings (who also tend to acquire a demoniac character), orders of angels, principalities and powers, and the battle waged by Christ and His armies under Michael's leadership against the forces of darkness. By and large the artist's preoccupation is with the last things, above all with the judgement. In a way that is incomprehensible to Eastern Christianity, demoniac and semi-demoniac beings make their appearance on the doorways of churches, even penetrating into the nave where they can be seen on the capitals.

The features which chiefly distinguish Romanesque art from the Byzantine and Early Christian are in part due to their Germanic origin, though they are also reminiscent of ancient oriental art, for in common with the latter the idea of God is essentially that of the Lord of Hosts and of the inexorable judge, before whom the faithful stand 'in great fear and trembling'.[1] Admittedly there are, even at a very early stage, counter-movements that keep closer to the Primitive Christian outlook or attempt to restore it, but these never achieve its sense of light.

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[1] Cf. F. Heer, *Reich und Gottesreich*, Dissertation (Vienna, 1937).

THE SECOND PHASE: GOD INCARNATE

'GOTHIC' (1140–1470)

Art is now under the sign of God Incarnate. A new picture of the divine comes into being and man's relation to God undergoes a fundamental change.

'The most striking thing about the new religious spirit,' it has been said, 'the spirit proclaimed by Bernard of Clairvaux, is the conception of the incarnate Redeemer—God comes closer to man.' He becomes more capable of being apprehended by the mind and the senses, he comes emotionally nearer to us, 'and has laid aside the signs of a majesty that only inspires our fear and with which we can have no loving and trustful relation'.[1] 'Love becomes the dominant power in the new religious spirit, and a reciprocity of love brings God and man closer to each other.'

The edifice of the church itself now becomes an actual picture of Heaven which the senses can perceive—and a new stress is laid on the sensually perceptible character of the Sacrament, so that men feel that in this Sacrament they actually possess God. The church is now a lofty hall of light, flooded with a jewelled radiance that seems no longer of this world, and filled with heavenly music.[2] Christ no longer has the character of a stern father and judge, but appears in His exalted humanity, as do, alongside of Him, Our Blessed Lady, and the saints.

Now the effect of all this is that Nature now becomes a fit subject for art, and the artists' field is gradually widened till it extends to every province of the created world. In place of mere grandeur we now have two things: a beauty—we may call it loveliness—that is essentially human, and downright ugliness. As the image of man, pure and simple, becomes more clearly defined, there develops sculpture in the round, though this last remains subordinate to architecture and closely bound to the architect's design, statues still being roofed over with a canopy. With this development of sculpture, the severe symbolism once used to express the divine, gives place to forms with which our ordinary senses are familiar. The supersensual is expressed in forms which the ordinary senses can grasp and the imagination that creates those forms is an imagination that works in sensual terms. Thus the whole function of art is transformed, and there now begins the study both of nature and antiquity, its starting-point being the ornament which acquires a new naturalistic life. The lay artist comes into his own.

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[1] Georg Weise, *Italien und die geistige Welt der Gotik* (1939). See also Weise's other works, which have contributed much to the intelligent arrangement of Western art into appropriate periods but which, because they present no new facts and are not always exact, have not always received from art historians the attention they deserve.

[2] H. Sedlmayr, *Die Entstehung der Kathedrale* (Zürich and Freiburg, 1950).

Once the process had begun, there was no stopping it. From the new type of sculpture it passed on to painting. It was an event of first-rate importance when, with Giotto, a wholly new kind of painting appeared. Light and shade were used to show the body as a rounded, solid thing. Rooms began to look like rooms, even within a two-dimensional frame. Following that the painter began to make the spatial relations between objects directly apparent to the eye. They became 'perspective'. The picture, combining within itself the arts of the painter, the sculptor and the architect, became a microcosm. The painting, in fact, became 'the heir of the cathedrals'.[1] At first it had merely translated holy truths and happenings into the cruder idiom of the senses and thus put them before us on a pictorial stage. Now it makes them suddenly quite real, as though they were actually present among us here and now. In this way the whole world around suddenly becomes a thing hallowed, and because it is a hallowed thing the painter progressively explores it further. The culminating point is reached when pictures strive to achieve the verisimilitude of a looking-glass—as in Van Eyck.

Side by side with the trend that shows the Second Person of the Trinity and the sacred world in general as sublime beings who are nevertheless not utterly removed from man, another trend is soon observable. This sought to bring the divine still closer to man emotionally by stressing the lowly, broken and pitiful aspects of the God-man's human nature. Now comes the figure of the Man of Sorrows, and we have the Pietà groups, the lamentations over the body of Christ and so on, these holy scenes being transposed into the ordinary world as we know it—the settings are now the streets and rooms of some little medieval town—and the result that this ordinary world itself acquires a peculiar value which it never possessed before. In a very definite sense that world becomes 'more real'.

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[1] Th. Hetzer, *op. cit.*

Having thus descended into the world of common men and things and found them worthy subjects for his art, the painter was soon to find that his study could extend over an illimitable field, but the spiritual attitude behind all this expresses itself in yet another form. Church buildings themselves now began to be looked on as things essentially secular. They were, after all, no more than the gathering places for men; the altar alone was holy. And so we begin to get a new sobriety in church design which contrasts sharply with the jewelled magnificence of the cathedrals, while the late Gothic tripartite altar becomes the new composite work of art.

The devotional picture now comes increasingly to be regarded as the most important of all forms of art, but as art becomes increasingly subjective, the old unity of ecclesiastical art begins to disintegrate. It breaks up into a multiplicity of isolated devotional pictures and chapels.

But we have seen that precisely because the Second Person of the Trinity has become more truly human, man has himself acquired a new significance; at the same time art no longer merely elevates the mind, it has also acquired the power of delighting the eye. And so there now comes into being a purely secular pole of art. It takes shape in the private sphere of the palace, and before long, of the burgher's house; and it is here that we have the beginnings of an art that, like the 'romances' of the time, is no longer confined to sacred things but uses a new and purely secular subject matter.

THE THIRD PHASE: THE GOD-MAN AND MAN THE GOD

RENAISSANCE AND BAROQUE (1470–1750)

Religious art is now under the sign of Man the Divine. A somewhat disproportionate emphasis begins on the quality of greatness in man, though such a quality can at best be but one side of his dual nature; his lowliness and misery tend to be consistently ignored. The 'great man' the '*divino*' is the cardinal figure of the time—a principle that holds good both in the spiritual and the temporal sphere. Man, in fact, is mightily exalted. He is not only created in the image of God, he is also a reflection of His glory and bears a likeness to God in his creative power—and indeed the very fact that he is thus regarded serves to bring about a glorious release of that same power. Men increasingly betray in their speech this consciousness of the majesty of man. The godlike man, be he saint or prince, is already a kind of transitional being halfway to the divine. Men's bodies are transfigured, a thing the import of which we cannot possibly grasp unless we see it in the light of the resurrection of the flesh. Bodily perfection becomes the symbol of its spiritual counterpart and nakedness the image of purity and truth.

There is now particular significance in the quality of the representations of Christ. He is shown transfigured and glorious, as the conqueror over death, resurrected in the flesh. His beauty and strength surpass that of men and physically He is an athlete. The victorious power that we see in Him illuminates even martyrdom and death.

In every sense Heaven and earth now come closer to each other, and the visible sign of this is the painted ceiling, which, precisely between 1470 and 1700, attains supreme splendour. Man's striving is upward and towards abundance, and the dominating religious emotion of the age is that of triumph.

All this is plain enough to see in the new form of church building which appears around 1470 and for some three centuries remains almost canonically binding. The whole conception is triumphal. The motif of the triumphal arch appears on the façade, and we now have the triumphal arched altar, a triumphal arch over it, and also the Christian triumphal column (Trinity columns and Mary columns). Assumptions and apotheoses become the central themes of religious art. They overshadow everything else and it is these themes that cause the painted ceiling to play a leading part. A dome full of light is the crown of the edifice, and it is here that the earthly building, which seems itself already to be in a kind of upward tension, changes imperceptibly and without any clear line of demarcation into an abode of light that seems no longer to be a thing of this world. All this is not so much a paganizing of Christianity as a Christianizing of pagan antiquity.

But now a new thing is to be seen beside the church and claiming full equality of status with the latter; it is the house of 'the great man' and it appears either in distinctive rural or urban form, as a castle or palace. This 'great man's house' is now developed into a composite work of art on its own account and one possessing its own iconology. Here all the gods of antiquity enter the service of the '*divino*', the godlike man, while these palaces and castles take on more and more the character of cult centres of human greatness, an ideal chiefly expressed and visible in the figures of Helios and Heracles. The kingdom of light at Versailles may be taken as the culminating point of this cult. The two spheres continue to approximate ever more closely to each other. Artistic forms employed in the one pass over to the other, and in the end they merge completely.

Under the sign of the heroic man the whole world is opened anew, for man is a microcosm and stands in sympathetic relationship with the macrocosm of the whole universe—starting from the stars through nature animate and inanimate and including the world both of history and of myth; all these things merge into one another without any abruptness of transition, rather does each pass over into another dynamically and by virtue of an organic connection—the spiritual becoming visible in the things of sense—all is of one substance.

And an 'organism of one substance' also exactly describes the composite work of art, for in it the different arts join in wedlock with one another and form a unity, even as now in the same painting 'ideal and reality, the near and the distant, the harsh and the tender, the grave and lofty and the gaily playful are all married one to the other'.[1] Moreover, art, science and poetry are for the Renaissance part of a single whole. The new anatomy, scientific perspective, the doctrine of the architectural orders, the science of iconology, all belong to art.

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[1] Th. Hetzer, *op. cit.*

It is only now that by reason of his creative power the artist himself becomes the embodiment of the 'godlike' man, it is only now that he becomes the 'universal artist', the '*uomo universale*', a type that appears with Michelangelo and ends with Goethe.

Inwardly man is fiery, passionate, 'enthusiastic', a word whose precise value needs some further definition. His attitude to the world is one of boundless optimism and confidence. Only in the Baroque could this be thought 'the best of all possible worlds'. Man feels sheltered, safe, and at home even in the newly discovered vastness of infinite space, in which the earth has now become a tiny particle. The basis of this attitude to life and to the world is his almost reckless trust in God's goodness, mercy and readiness to be reconciled to men, for the world is already saved. It is already transfigured, through Christ and His resurrection. Evil has already been conquered, it is unreal, a departing shadow.

There are, of course, counter-trends—Michelangelo's tragic world, Mannerism with its attitude of doubt and fear, Protestantism, the very essence of which prevents it from accepting the idea of human greatness. Here there survived the medieval idea of man as petty and miserable and this finds its secular expression in the representation of man and nature exactly as the painter finds them, so that these subjects become increasingly the themes of art. In religious matters Protestantism's attitude to worship and the Sacraments causes it to reject the idea of the composite work of art. Religious art withdraws into the burgher's house; there, in the private devotional painting, it has its last exquisite flowering, and in Rembrandt's work forms a unique synthesis between the Baroque picture of the world and that of the late Middle Ages; man is seen as a transient being, but one whose lowliness is offset by a certain greatness. Indeed, every state of man is presented to us, from that of a beggar to that of High Priest and King.

What makes the epoch unique is the combination of a vital Christian spirit with the idea of the organic, an idea which cannot be found either in the Gothic or the Romanesque and which the age which followed was once again to lose. Certainly the epoch had its perilous aspects and its faults, if we see it in this its essential character, yet we cannot deny that, along with the Greek, it is one of the great peaks in the history of man.

GOTHIC AND RENAISSANCE-BAROQUE

The second and third phases are more closely connected than the rest. Both, though in different ways, are anthromorphic and hence in many respects approximate to the great ages of antiquity. The essentially new element in the High Renaissance—the revival of the antique gods and of the architectural orders of antiquity and the new illusionist ceiling paintings—does not appear till about 1470, yet the ancestry of the High Renaissance's vision of man goes back, through Masaccio and Giotto to the representations of 'resurrected life' in the 'classical' Gothic cathedrals of the thirteenth century, while the picture of man produced by the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Protestant Netherlands has its roots in the thirteenth-century conception of the lowliness of God—the 'stable and the cross'—as indeed the Protestant style of church building has a precedent in the churches of the mendicant orders, which tended to some extent to react from the cathedral style. The Renaissance begins to come into being side by side with the Gothic and the echoes of the latter die away alongside of the Renaissance and the Baroque.

The Baroque, and above all the late German Baroque, culminating in the work of Balthasar Neumann, succeeds on occasion in combining elements of the Gothic with those of the Renaissance, whereas an organic combination of genuine Romanesque with the Renaissance-Baroque is inconceivable.

THE FOURTH PHASE: AUTONOMOUS MAN

THE MODERN AGE (1750–?)

This age is marked by the divorce between God and man, by the appearance of supposedly autonomous man, and by the substitution for the Triune God, of new gods and idols—Nature and Reason (Pantheism, Deism), art (æstheticism), the machine (materialism), chaos (antitheism and nihilism). It has already been shown how this determined the subject-matter of art as well as its formal principles and its technique. Thus, for instance, the dominance of the two-dimensional at the expense of the three-dimensional derives from the basic spiritual attitude of the age (there is, as we have seen, new and significant use of the element of distance, but foreground objects tend to be two-dimensionally rendered).

Indeed, the more we contrast the epochs with one another, the clearer it becomes that they differ even in those features in which they appear to resemble one another. The new dominance of the two-dimensional in modern art, for instance, has an entirely different significance from that which it possesses in pre-Gothic art. Romanesque painting adheres to the two-dimensional because this is a means of expressing its other-worldliness, whereas modern art uses similar means in order to repress the human element in art—an element intimately bound up with the three-dimensional. Modern art circumscribes and limits man's personalities, not because it wishes to subordinate him to another world—indeed it does not believe in this last—but because it considers that there are 'elemental things which are greater and more real than he'. In a word it transcends man, not because it strives to move towards a higher plane, but, on the contrary, because it moves towards a lower one.

So far all goes to show that what determines the character and subject-matter of art is the nature of the religious belief behind it, or the substitute, whatever it may be, that takes the place of such belief; for, as Franz von Baader says, 'there is no man, nor has there ever been a man who did not sacrifice either to his God or to his idol'—and this applies even down to our own day, when art had apparently become wholly secularized.

XVI

TODAY AS THE TURNING POINT IN THE HISTORY OF MAN

THE AGEING OF CIVILIZATION

IT may perhaps be contended that all late phases of civilization tend to fall away somewhat from the full conception of the nature of man, each doing so in a way that is peculiarly its own; in one phase that conception will acquire a sort of ceremonial stiffness, in another man will be viewed wholly from the outside. In yet a third the whole concept will be lost in a pullulation of the colossal and the empty, in other cases it will become soulless, coarse and generally run to seed. On the strength of all this it might perhaps be said that what has taken place in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries merely represents the particular way in which the Faustian civilization of the West goes through the business of dying—and in that case Spengler would be right.

Even then, however, we should still have to ask ourselves whether the death that all civilizations are supposed to die is really the same kind of death, a question which was raised by none other than Spengler himself, and whether besides natural death from old age, after the exhaustion of all vitality, and violent death as the result of alien invasion, there is not also a death from physical and spiritual disease, whether there is not such a thing as the madness of an entire civilization.

If we compare our own civilization with that of antiquity, we can see at once that even in its decline and decadence the latter preserved its allegiance to the human ideal. Even there, of course, in its later phases, the temples of the gods declined in relative importance and were replaced by other outlets for artistic energy, such as the amphitheatre, the imperial baths, the imperial fora, etc. All these were in a sense expressions of a hidden cult of deified men, of human gods, a cult, that is to say, implying, in this its Roman form, a conception of man that had definitely degenerated, but nevertheless one that centred unmistakably round man. The ageing of our civilization, therefore, which will be discussed in a moment, is thus clearly accompanied by the phenomenon of dehumanization, and to this we must add yet a third, the unique circumstance that it extends over the entire planet. All three must be taken into account if we wish to see our own age in the correct historical perspective and to determine its function.

First as to the ageing of our civilization. In this, its fourth phase, there are undoubtedly signs which may be interpreted as the symptoms of old age. We have in the decline of biological fertility and in the relatively increasing numbers of old people, symptoms which, though with some caution, we might interpret as those of old age. We could also point to certain phenomena in art—though this has not actually been done—that are analogous to those of other 'late' civilizations, and here we could actually go further than Spengler, but these last can scarcely be said to be decisive in determining the character of this fourth phase.

Even Spengler's thesis, however, has not proved that a civilization grown old may not revive again, either biologically, through the infusion of fresh blood or through the energizing of its spiritual powers, in other words, through a religious revival, or, again—and this is the most likely—through both simultaneously. For civilization, like man, who is its carrier, is an organism that belongs both to the natural and to the spiritual world, so that in this case the idea of ageing must necessarily be something more than a purely biological concept, and it seems to me that his failure to recognize this fact is precisely what causes Spengler's interpretation of late antiquity to break down. On the other hand no sound arguments have yet been brought to bear against Spengler to prove that it is impossible or even unlikely that Western civilization should die of old age.

The study of art has nothing decisive to contribute by way of an answer to this particular question. We must dispose of it with a 'non liquet'. The second problem, that of dehumanization, is in any case by far the more important of the two.

DEHUMANIZATION

Although, however, the phenomena discussed in this book have no bearing on the question of old age, they are nevertheless intensely significant. If we take an unbiased view of the whole course of Western civilization, as it is reflected in art, and compare it with that of other civilizations, we will immediately see that in this last fourth phase it has attained a condition that does not occur in any other civilization at all.

The basic thesis of Spengler's morphology of civilizations is that all the great civilizations develop by the same stages and indeed that their phases are of absolutely equal duration.[1] This thesis must now be abandoned for it does not correspond to reality. The great civilizations are not to be distinguished from one another, as different individuals of the same species are to be distinguished. Rather are there among them a whole number of species.

If, therefore, we want to do justice to these facts, we must approach them somewhat differently, and no doubt more effective approaches will one day be made than that which is here undertaken, for here we do no more than take the phenomena of the world of art as our starting-point and examine the matter from that angle.

We can first of all distinguish a group of early cultures which we may designate by the term of 'first stage' cultures. This does not mean that they do not pass through the various phases which Spengler describes at some length, but for all that they do not develop beyond a certain point. They remain religiously determined, and it is religion that conditions the forms under which they pass into disintegration.

Only three of the great civilizations pass beyond that point, so far as their art is concerned, the Greek, the East-Asian (Chinese) and, in its second and third phase, the civilization of the West.

[1] Cf. Giambattisto Vico, *Principi di Scienza nuova* (Naples, 1725).

It is in these alone that a 'humanist' stage is reached in which man becomes the central point of reference, and in which as parallel phenomena, art and the artist achieve a relative independence as against the power of religion. It is these civilizations, and only these, which reach the stage where there is an art that seeks consciously to achieve beauty, that deliberately sets out to please, an art that turns lovingly to the experience of the senses and to the play of the emotions, an art that brings in its train the art collector and the connoisseur of artistic pleasure. The most sure criterion of this relation of art to man is the appearance of 'subjective' painting which is acquainted in one form or another with perspective, the uses of light and shade, and also such categories of the painter's art as landscape, *genre* painting, etc., etc.[1]

This small group of civilizations forms the species of what may be called the two-stage civilization.

Now a civilization that spontaneously and in the normal course of organic growth reaches this humanist stage must be already, even in embryo, of a very special kind. Even the first stage of these civilizations has a character different from the rest—and a different internal structure, even as its subsequent development is bound to be different.

Of all the civilizations that have attained the humanist stage, only one has passed beyond it—our own. Only our own civilization in this, its fourth, stage has attained a 'trans-humanist' stage. Ours is, in fact, the only three-stage civilization that there is. In the first stage it has some of the marks of other theocentric civilizations; in its second and third phases, particularly in the Renaissance and the Baroque, it shows the normal characteristics of the anthropotropic type, and one might well have expected it to end in a mere petrifaction of the Baroque, though it is hardly the historian's business to indulge in these hypothetical speculations. However, it went on to a fourth phase in which it produced a stage that is wholly *sui generis*, and, that being so, its essential nature cannot be explained by comparison with any other civilization.

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[1] I cannot here go into any detail on the important question of the position of Islamic art, whose interpretation by Spengler is not wholly satisfactory.

WORLD-WIDE DIFFUSION

But, as we have seen, it is not only the existence of this last phase, with its peculiar characteristics, that causes our civilization to differ from all others. There is also the circumstance that it has extended throughout the world, a process that began in the third phase and which in our time, thanks to the development of new means of communication, has produced a thing that is absolutely unprecedented, a planet that, at any rate in the technological sense, may be referred to as one world.

Now all the indications are that this state of affairs cannot be reversed and that technology with its 'cosmogonic' consequences has come to stay, even though the West should perish. But this means that with Western civilization the phase of world history to which the great separate civilizations belonged has come to an end, that a new phase of that world history is beginning—the 'one world' phase—and is doing so with a series of terrible crises. The character and structure of this phase cannot be foreseen.

It seems to be the lot of Western civilizations—thanks, no doubt, to that tremendously dynamic quality that has marked it from the start—that it should bring about this transition. It may, of course, still prove to be the last great civilization of the old type. As against this there opens out before us the possibility of a new form of civilization, a single world civilization, which would be a kind of roof over the individual civilizations. If that were to eventuate, our Western civilization in this, its latest, phase would be a beginning.

To see that this possibility is real, we must reflect that the history of human culture does not consist of the great civilizations alone. Just as the phase of the great civilizations was preceded by primitive tribal cultures restricted to small areas, so the phase of the great civilizations may well be followed by one of world civilization. If that were to happen, it would show that human history had been progressing towards ever more comprehensive combinations of cultures.

This in turn would mean that Spengler's conception was relegated to an inferior place, though, like every correct theory, it is not overthrown by a new one but is left to stand with a limited area of reference, and Spengler's theory would still be valid for the one-stage group of cultures. Incidentally, it seems significant to me that Spengler's mind, whose essentially anti-humanist qualities are themselves a symptom of the times and were recognized as such by Haecker, was rather more successful in understanding these 'Pre-humanist' civilizations than it was in other departments. For it is only these civilizations that are really 'isolated'; the tendency to treat other civilizations as though they too were self-contained entities is extremely eloquent, in so far as it argues a readiness to look upon organic things as though they were inorganic and capable of arbitrary fragmentation.

FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

But nothing has been said as yet about the character of the world-wide ramification which has been noted nor of the possible progress of our civilization in such circumstances; that progress may quite well be a progress towards its end.

Two possibilities can be envisaged. The first is that this new world civilization will simply develop the characteristics of our own age in a very extreme form—at least as far as its attitude to man is concerned. This means that it will abandon humanism not only in its narrower but in its more profound sense, that it will remain rooted in the inorganic, and will also be a retrogression, a *ricorso* to the primitive, but to a primitive that is not pre-human but post-human.

The vision of such a time appears in naïvely sentimental form in Madách's 'Tragedy of Man'. There is much greater clarity of definition in Jünger's[1] picture of an age on which the machine has stamped its formal impress. Jaspers bluntly describes it as follows: 'A world in which all faith has been completely lost, a world full of mechanized and mechanical men, who have lost both their God and themselves.' This is the end of all inward nobility, it is the end of personality. Behind all this, like the yawning of an abyss, we see the chaos of a disintegrating culture.

If we take this view, we must necessarily see the culminating-point of all human progress in the theanthropic cultures up to the year 1760; and in particular in the cultures up to that date of the Christian West, which, in a certain inward sense, had suspended and surpassed all other cultures. The time 1700 onwards would then be the beginning of the decline, the beginning of the drift from humanity.

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[1] Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter* (Hamburg, 1932).

The second possibility is that the conditions symbolized in the art of our day are only a transitional stage. Much as the culture of the Christian Empire followed the petrifying and even more externalized culture of late antiquity with its recurrent crises, so the present epoch may be but the forerunner of another. The Roman Empire provided the framework within which Christianity spread, and in much the same way the present technological unification of our planet might be followed by a civilization which was indeed a civilization of the inward man and had its foundations in a true culture of the soul, in a re-integration of man and in a return to his true centre.

Soloviev has put forward certain arguments which seem to validate such an idea. From the prophecy that Christ's last coming will be preceded by that of Antichrist, he deduces the general principle that every positive and decisive new development in the history of the world is preceded by a kind of caricature of itself. Before man there came the ape, before the appearance of the God-man there came His caricature in the shape of man the God (the Hellenistic tyrants). Antichrist, the ape of Christ, comes at the end of all. In much the same way the appearance of the machine, the symbol of material dominion over the world, might be the forerunner of a spiritual and 'organic' dominion over it, might, in fact, be the prelude to a 'Theurgy'.

These forecasts should not strictly speaking be conceived as alternative prophecies, rather should we note that their very existence has a bearing on the nature of our own epoch, of which the immediate present is a part. For it is in the nature of that epoch to be Janus-faced and to stand torn between two possible historical decisions, for whether it is our hopes or fears that are realized in the future, depends on ourselves, nor will theories be decisive. Man alone is capable of that, man in action but also possessed of a knowledge of the truth—man, in a word, as a full and integrated personality.

XVII

PROGNOSIS

It is only because we cannot fully understand the present and have the skill to enquire into it that we use all our powers of mind to understand the future.—BLAISE PASCAL. Letter VIII to Mlle de Roannez, Dec. 1656.

SINCE what has been examined here is wholly unique, it is quite impossible to base any forecasts upon it by comparing this our own epoch with any other period of history. The best we can do is to set up a kind of balance between the destructive and healing forces that it contains.

Of course, the first question by which we are faced is whether the process we have observed is or is not reversible—though one is certainly tempted to say that a reverse seems unlikely, if not impossible. The individual symptoms, in particular, the arts and their disintegration into something lying wholly outside the field of art, and the general decay and petrifaction which we can observe, seem at first sight to have proceeded so far that we may believe ourselves to have reached the condition described by Goethe in his sketch *Geistesepochen*, written in 1818:

'For as this way of looking at things gains ground, there follows immediately that last epoch, which we may well call the prosaic epoch. It is an epoch that does not seek to humanize the content of past ages nor to adapt it to human understanding and ordinary usage, but rather brings forth the most ancient things into the light of common day and in this wise completely destroys all primitive or inherited popular or priestly beliefs, yes, even the belief of reason which professes to see an essentially beneficent logic' (*einen löblichen Zusammenhang*) 'behind things in themselves strange.

'This epoch cannot last long. Human nature, excited by the crises of destiny, is such that it must needs leap backward, defying intelligent leadership. It mingles religious creeds, folklore and age-old instinctive beliefs, clings first to one old traditional superstition then to another, delves into mysteries, lets fables take the place of poetry and exalts them into articles of faith. Instead of giving rational teaching and seeking quietly to influence people, men on all sides sow good seed together with bad, *nor is there any longer a central point towards which men may look.* Each man comes forward as a teacher and a leader; and presents his complete folly as though it were a perfect whole.

'Thus the value of every mystery is destroyed and even old popular beliefs are desecrated; qualities which developed naturally one out of the other, now act as elements in conflict, and so once more we have utter confusion, but not that first fruitful, pregnant confusion, rather is it a confusion that is marked by death and decay, and one out of which God's own spirit could no longer create a worthy world.'

It should again be stressed that this whole question is in no way related to the 'decline of the West'. As far as the forecast here attempted is concerned, it is—astonishing and unconvincing as this may sound—completely irrelevant whether we follow Spengler and believe in the impending death of Western civilization or whether we don't. For the conditions here described are by no means confined to the West, and they would continue to exist in various parts of the world, even if the West had duly 'declined' according to plan. Today those conditions are global and they will become increasingly global as time goes by. The new alleged art of the constructional engineer and its conquest over that of the architect is today a global fact. It is true that there is here and there a certain amount of resistance to it, which varies in strength from one place to another, nor does the disordered condition eat everywhere into the marrow; nevertheless, the condition is a general one all over the planet, and everywhere the sheer survival of the higher type of man is the crucial issue of the day.

In these circumstances the answer to the question whether the process is or is not reversible cannot be found through a comparison with other civilizations. All we can do is to examine the present with utmost patience and the most sympathetic care and see whether healing powers are, at least incipiently, stirring within it, and what the chances are of their survival and success; nor in doing so must we concern ourselves much with the peripheral zone where in the nature of things symptoms are liable to be extreme, but rather with the heart of the disease. No such thorough examination has yet been made, neither can we stamp it out of the ground. Moreover, there are limits to what can be done. There are certain zones—and they may well be the most important—which can simply not be sounded. They may well refuse to yield up their secrets until the whole epoch has been closed—and overcome.

THE POSITION IN THE FIELD OF ART

If we examine the manifestations of art from this angle, we gain the impression that, in the near future, at any rate, no fundamental change of general condition is to be expected.

If we look at the tasks that confront the artist we see no sign of any new centre or point of reference coming into being, nor indeed can we say how such a thing could eventuate, for it lies wholly outside our power to influence the process. New forms of a visible cult which might be instrumental in creating such a 'centre' or point of reference cannot be invented or excogitated, nor, despite certain efforts made in this direction, are we likely to see new forms of church building. The absence of any attempt to create new and valid cult patterns, and the bankruptcy of iconology show us that any hopes of such development are very distant indeed. We are almost driven to the conclusion that before anything of the kind could happen it would have to be preceded by something else. The number of building jobs seems likely to continue to be legion and that means that we shall continue to be plagued by the question whether we are to try and impress some uniformity upon them or whether we should allow differences to subsist between them—differences not only of basic shape, but of character, of style, that word not being used here in a purely formal sense.

Actually we seem, now that attempts at pluralism have failed, to be faced by two possibilities—assuming of course that the old egalitarianism has now run its course—and no theory can determine which is the more likely to be realized—a thing that must ultimately be decided by the quality of our deeper need.

One possibility is implicit in the fact that the transformation of architecture into engineering construction has withdrawn most of the provinces of building from art proper altogether. This has left the architect his old original sphere, so that the field is once more free for him for church, monument and memorial building. This means that art can now withdraw once more into the narrow province of the sacred—which at the beginnings of the great cultures was peculiarly its own—assuming, of course, that it still has the capacity to master the problems which it finds there. Such a restriction of the artist's scope might have the effect of a concentration of his powers, and such a restriction might well result, if the trend towards egalitarianism got the upper hand elsewhere.

But what would happen if a new pluralism were to develop, a pluralism of character of the kind described above? The effect of this would be to preserve all those types of building that in the course of time had become associated with a permanent style or form in the style or form they had acquired. They would then continue to subsist one beside the other and any aspiration towards a uniform style would be renounced. The new quality would reside precisely in this stylistic multiplicity and in the great number of artistic problems with which the architect was confronted. The ultimate task would be to impose an order that had real significance upon this variegated whole, and to leave scope for the church building to take shape after its own fashion at the head of this hierarchical structure.

The hierarchy of architectural tasks will create an organic relationship to the past. Most certainly it would not reject it entirely, as did the first and second revolutions with their singularly unintelligent slogan '*Il faut tout recommencer à zero*', which was stretched to the point where men insisted that art must begin afresh not only 'now' but in every generation. Had that principle been acted on, it might well have caused the fragmentation of man, space and nature which current movements had already brought about, to be followed by a fragmentation of time itself. As against this, however, our supposed 'hierarchism' would hardly fall into the opposite blunder. It would not place an absolute value on one particular epoch, for taken in its entirety such an epoch belongs to time that is past. It can never in its entirety be a model for the present but only in that part of it that contains 'eternal', that is to say 'supertemporal' values.

This hierarchism of tasks would be multi-dimensional in so far as it preserves within itself and acts as a kind of unifying structure for the values of a time that is departed. It is certainly the more modern of the two possibilities.

In the field of painting and sculpture, fields in which at the moment the lack of clear themes causes the artist's imagination to be both arbitrary and erratic, new tasks of the kind that present themselves in the natural course of events can only come from one source. That source can only be a revived sacred art; for sacred art alone can provide genuine themes. Hans von Marées recognized long ago that 'the chief enemy of the practice of art must of necessity be that speculation to which men are confined when there is no external motive power to bring works of art into being'. The ordinary private house is no longer capable of setting the artist any natural tasks, even though portraits and landscapes still lead a vegetative existence from sheer inertia of habit, while the new powers have showed themselves quite incapable of providing the artist with any kind of fruitful theme.

If one searches the various provinces of artistic creation for the presence of some kind of healing force—and in doing so one almost invariably overlooks just that factor that is destined ultimately to play the largest part—one only finds a single department that shows any promise in this respect. For in only one department, that of the funereal monument, can one detect any unquestionable improvement on past performance.

The decay of the funereal monument, which had its last truly great age round the year 1800, a time when there was still a truly profound feeling about death, is among the most alarming features of the past hundred and fifty years. Nowhere does the contempt for man stand forth in so glaring a light—in no other department is its effect so oppressive upon the mind as in the cemeteries of our great cities and in the burial practices associated with them, nowhere is the absence of any true culture so crassly in evidence. For, apart from the cult of the earth, all culture rests quite literally on the cult of the dead. Without respect for the dead there is no respect for man. All the higher and truly luminous religions rest upon this primeval foundation, this 'inner basalt', and where they sever their connection with it, they are in danger of turning purely 'spiritualist'—and so of losing their substance.

It is possible that this welcome phenomenon presages a kind of revival of the sacred from out of its basic and aboriginal foundation, and indeed the great cults of the dead stand at the beginnings of every civilization, for it is precisely here in the very kingdom of death itself that death must be conquered by spiritual means, it is here that birth is given to the higher life.

Even this hope, however, is a slender one.

THE POSITION IN THE FIELD OF MATERIAL CULTURE

Since the art of our day is itself merely a symptom of man's general condition, we should obviously try and see whether the course of the disease may not have been even more palpably reversed—in other departments of human activity—and perhaps reversed at an even earlier stage—and indeed there are signs of this in man's relation to the earth.

The earth, from which he lives, compels him to recognize that there are certain modes of thought and action which are definitely destructive and literally bring ruin in their train. The earth is indeed the great refuter of inorganic and mechanistic thinking, and that is why in the culture of the earth we see movements arising which painfully re-establish man's natural relationship to it and in so doing once more re-establish the basis of culture, for, together with the cult of the dead, all higher culture rests, as we have seen, upon the 'culture' of the earth.

Some twenty years ago Alwin Seifert wrote as follows:

'North America gives us a terrifying demonstration of the ultimate goal to which this road leads—and North America does not stand alone. In their search for a one hundred per cent crop men have uprooted every tree, every shrub, every blade of wild buffalo grass in order to sow wheat in its place.

'Today the vast land is forsaken and turning to desert. The soil that once carried wheat has become the victim of the winds and has for years been moving across the continent in black duststorms. On the 11th May, 1934, alone three hundred tons of fruitful mother soil were blown away—forty-five million hectares of arable soil were destroyed in Illinois, Ohio, Maryland and North Carolina, while fifty-five million hectares were severely damaged, and a further forty-five million are threatened with destruction. The American Government now wants to use a labour service of six hundred and fifty thousand men to plant hundreds of millions of trees, in order to put a stop to the steady eastward recession of the frontier of cultivation. This attempt is bound to fail so long as the conservation measures are concerned in purely mechanical terms.'[1]

So much for the physical effects of our treatment of the earth; the metaphysical ones are no better.

Driven by extreme necessity, America is virtually doing the opposite of what till now was thought among ourselves to be correct procedure.[2] With incredible ease she is shaking off the heritage and so-called 'achievements' of the nineteenth century and seeking other methods of work, which are directly connected with medieval tradition—though there is certainly no return to the Middle Ages. 'They set the shape of their fields up curves, avoiding all right angles, whereas we ourselves justify right-angled fields by the fact that our streams and rivers have been straightened. They terrace the hillsides. We encourage slopes in the interests of drainage. They lay out their fields in narrow strips in order to have the greatest possible variety of crops in close proximity to one another. We strive to make the unit as large as possible in nostalgic admiration, no doubt, of the Wild West pictures of our childhood, pictures which showed harvesting machines drawn by thirty-two horses toiling through wheatfields the size of a whole province. They plant new hedges and copses—we cut down and root out those that are not actually protected by law. In the corners of their fields they sow millet, sorgum, sunflowers and so on, as food for bird and game—we rob these creatures of their last nesting and mating grounds. They are re-introducing the beaver to build dams for them for nothing, they dam up old river-beds and put down fish where formerly none could live. We straighten out and ruin rich trout-streams. They use the most ancient methods to try and keep every grain of soil firm in the ploughed furrow—we let it float down to the sea as mud in the rivers. The wish-picture before the mind of an engineer in the American Soil Conservation Service is a landscape richly interspersed with woods, scrub, hedges, pools and fish-ponds, a landscape with little sawmills and little power-stations, a landscape in which the farmer grows everything that the ground will produce, a village in which all the old craftsmen are busy again—in other words, a typical ancient European landscape of just the kind that we are ourselves so busily annihilating because we are still in bondage to the mechanistic spirit of the nineteenth century.'

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[1] Quoted with one or two omissions and alterations from Alwin Seifert's 'Die Versteppung Deutschland's', in *Deutsche Technik* (1936 and 1937). In this Seifert refers to H. S. Person's *Little Waters* and to the reports of chiefs of America's Soil Conservation Service.

[2] Seifert is referring to conditions within the German Reich. Concerning Austria he has the following to say: 'The loveliest German country at the northern foot of the Alps is Upper and Lower Austria. It is not a country rich in forests, but the forest with all its blessings is never absent anywhere. Every field path, every brook, the border of every meadow has dense rows of trees and bushes, and all the land in between is well cultivated. That beauty is here united with maximum productivity is proved by the size of the farmhouses, which are scattered like fortresses about the country. Among these square farms there are some that cover a hectare of ground. Austrian "backwardness" made invasion by the scientific farming methods of the nineteenth century impossible. That is why today the farmers are sitting with justifiable pride in their farms, and looking upon a land that is the fairest of all homelands' (from 'Die Zukunft der Osterreichischen Landschaft', in *Die Strasse* (1939)).

Let this one example suffice here to confirm the argument.

It is heartening indeed to see natural perversity rebuffed, even if it be only in one small and restricted sector of life, and it is heartening to see men preparing to return to the natural order; and this not in pursuance of some abstract romantic programme, but because practical experience has convinced them that it is the sensible thing to do. Whether such trends are strong enough permanently to stem the drift towards devastation is, of course, an open question, but in such a case as this even partial cures do go to the root of the process. They prove that life itself can cause men to turn about and retrace their steps, and in so far as they do this, they give grounds for hope that an analogous process of self-healing might one day become evident in the spiritual sphere.

These observations should inspire hope in those whom nature has endowed with the gift of intuitive perception, a sense of quality and a feeling for symbols, for such men often tend to be intimidated by what appear to be the slick and logical proofs produced by baser spirits and by the cold-hearted scorn of such men. They fall under the illusion that they are a dying minority —they who should be the 'cells' from which healing could proceed. There are indeed many things that are classified as 'backward' that might be the starting-point of real inner progress.

THE POSITION IN THE INTELLECTUAL FIELD

Here the first sign that gives any hope at all is simply the fact that many people have at last begun to realize how disastrous are the potentialities of the present situation; and that such people no longer congratulate themselves on living in an age of supposed emancipation.

It lies in our own hands whether or no we contrive to strengthen that conviction. It is certainly our duty to try and do so. In carrying it out we must be able to provide practical proof of the value for life of a recognition of the truth, a truth that has too long been denounced as being actually inimical to life. As Berdyaev says: 'The recognition of the truth must not be merely theoretical, it must be a practical thing, it must challenge us to a remoulding of our lives and to a revaluing of all our values.'[1]

With all the spiritual power that they can command, our men of learning must make it plain that methods of thought and observation which can quite properly be applied to the inorganic, and which may, when so applied, show noteworthy results, are quite inappropriate for dealing with those higher forms of being that are the true home of man. They must make it plain that the application of such methods outside their proper sphere is quite

[1] Berdyaev, *On Human Destiny.*

literally unscientific, and must in the last resort be inimical to life and to the human spirit, and that it must end ultimately in the ruin, if not the death of both. There are forms of an objective, precise and scientific approach to these matters as there are to others, and though they are as yet imperfectly developed, one can say this about them: they are entirely different from the methods appropriate to the study of the inorganic world. An appreciation of these things is already beginning to dawn even on the leaders of extreme 'Modernism', which in actual fact was not really modern at all but merely topical.[1] We do not believe that we can 'manufacture' a cure by mere recognition of the truth, but we do believe that better and more profound recognition of the truth can release and strengthen forces which have the power of healing and restoring us. Here, however, we reach the point where the purely speculative forecast, which can never be sure of its own accuracy, passes over into what Jaspers calls 'awakening' or 'quickening prognosis', one, that is to say, in which the will plays a part in making the forecast come true. The cardinal matter of this truth that we must recognize—this truth that brings us healing power—the thing to which we must have clear and irrefutable certitude, is simply this, that our dream of autonomous man was a disaster, a thing that could only end by destroying us, as we can well see by contemplating the results of that dream, both in nature and in art; but that this dream can have no natural power over our minds against our better understanding and—who knows?—against what may soon be the re-awakened instincts of men spiritually renewed, that this dream is in fact already ended and dead, as dead as the dream of an autonomous architecture, an autonomous painting and an autonomous art—as dead, also, as that of an autonomous state.

THE SPIRITUAL

In our collective spiritual life the first sign that the healing process had begun would be that fearful, melancholic and peculiar feeling of estrangement from life had given place to lightness of heart—

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[1] In this connection particular note should be taken of the conclusion of S. Giedion's book, *Time, Space and Architecture* (1946).

not to that biological and conscious gaiety of which Nietzsche and his disciples have so much to say—and in which they were themselves so markedly deficient—but to that joy that rises from the depths of the soul and is a kinsman of true humour.

There is some historical ground for what has just been said: Nietzsche was speaking the truth when he said 'Enlightenment is always followed by a darkening of men's souls and a pessimistic colouring of life. Towards 1770 (!) you can already note a lessening of joy.' Yet, as against that, it is equally true that all past epochs whose dominant mood was fear have been followed by a return of cheerfulness, of 'light' and confidence. This has nothing to do with mere external circumstance; a catastrophe as terrible as the Thirty Years War failed utterly to cloud the skies of art.

Humour is the pacemaker of this gladness of the heart. Whenever in history the vision of Hell in all its horror has been mastered and defeated, it is into the creations of a kind of cosmic and liberating humour that it dissolves. And that holds good in reverse, for wherever there is even an infinitesimal admixture of this element of humour in modern art—and that happens sometimes in the work of Kubin and that of Klee—there the inhuman and melancholy spell is broken.

Seen thus, there seems to be new promise in those modest refugees of art and humanity in which, under the massive ice of this age of fear, joy still hibernates and retains its germinal life. Yet for its flowering it needs a soil, and there is but one soil that can bring it to fruition—it is the soil of knowledge, the knowledge that we are creatures of God.

POSTSCRIPT

THERE is only one remedy—to hold fast to the eternal image of man, but this eternal image is a thing that men cannot simply excogitate, for it is not of their making.

Nor is there any means of holding fast in the mind this image, or of seeing it with any clarity, unless we truly believe that man has been created—potentially—in the image of God, and that he has his place in a definite ordering of the world—even though that ordering has been disturbed.

This is our fixed point.

The leverage cannot be applied from without, neither can it be applied to the generality. It can only be applied within ourselves.

The whole diagnosis of our time can, indeed, only yield results if it is used to refer back to ourselves, so that we may see what manner of men we are—and become different men from these.

Whether any change of general condition can thus be brought about seems open to question, but 'Let the motive be in the deed, and not in its issue' (Ludwig van Beethoven).

We must not fail in our trust that the individual by healing himself will contribute to the healing of the whole; for there is such a thing as solidarity in suffering. Moreover, the diseased condition of the whole had its starting-point in the rotting away of individual cells. It will only be overcome by men who have within themselves mastered this radical disturbance, and have thus renewed themselves.

Renewal can, however, only be attempted, when the condition is recognized as being definitely one of disease, where people are clearly suffering under that condition and are ashamed that man should thus be degraded from his rightful place, and when, because of that, they are nigh to despair. Indeed, hope is most real when suffering is greatest.

We add this observation.

In all of this it was the artists who in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries suffered most profoundly, in particular did those suffer who were charged with the task of making man's fall visible in terrible visions to their contemporaries. There begins to exist in the nineteenth century an entirely new type of man, that of the suffering artist—the type of the artist lonely, erring, and in despair, the artist on the verge of madness. The artists of the nineteenth century, the great and profound spirits of that time, often have the character of sacrificial victims. The long line from Hölderlin, Goya, Friedrich, Runge, Kleist over Daumier, Stifter, Nietzsche—he too was an artist—to Dostoevski, Van Gogh and Strindberg, with his 'Mankind! Oh, the waste! Oh, the pity of it!' represents a vast solidarity of suffering under the weight of the age. All suffer because God has become distant or, perhaps, is dead—and because man is degraded.

And greatest of all in all this is the suffering of the West. That is why there is in the West still spiritual hope, however bad may be its material circumstance.

There are enormous potentialities even in despair. 'Actually,' it has been written, 'only that man can despair whose sense of values goes down to the very depths of his being, depths in which reason is no longer capable either of judging or justifying. . . . Despair can indeed for some men, though not for all, be an act which reveals the very depth of that being for the very first time. They must pass through the critical zero-point of their lives in order to discover the meaning which their existence here on earth is intended to have, the meaning which they are driven by an inexorable necessity to realize' (Philipp Lersch).

If indeed the West is capable of the renewal which such despair may engender, it may once again become the leader and the light-bearer of the world. 'There are men', writes Christian Morgenstern, 'who stand in actual need of catastrophe'—and that may well hold good of peoples, or even of entire cultures.

As to art, some time, perhaps a very long time, may have to elapse before the empty place in the midst of its world can be filled—and if indeed it is to be filled, we must keep alive the thought that in the lost centre the empty throne awaits the perfect man.

Those to whose minds that thought continues to be present will see the new age, even if they themselves may not enter upon it.

FOUR WAYS OF CONSIDERING ART

Learn to think clearly, and you will love with ardour—SCHILLER.

The very beginnings of this work were inspired by the research of Emil Kaufmann on Ledoux, which came to my notice in 1930. I saw at once that Kaufmann had succeeded in making a discovery of the utmost importance towards the understanding of our age, but that at the same time he had not wholly recognized the true significance of his own discovery, and that the phenomena so clearly perceived by him were not correctly evaluated.

In so far as they relate to architecture, I expounded the thoughts I have developed here in a lecture given in 1934, and, in 1937, in a discourse that was not published, I attempted the first recapitulation of the whole art of the period, which contained the germ of all that has been amplified in the present work. In 1941 I set it down for the first time, to approximately the same extent, and in 1941 and 1944 delivered the material in university lectures. The title *Art in Crisis—The Lost Centre* dates from then. Very little that is new and of substance has been added since. But in the present book the enquiry is taken back to those, as yet, barely explored sources, the *fons et origo* of the world condition today, and this, to my way of thinking, cannot be correctly viewed merely from the social, economic, or from the political angles, but only as arising from and returning to humanity as a whole.

Whoever upholds the doctrine of 'the lost centre' can be certain from the outset to perceive the consequences of doing so personally. He will have against him not only those people who reject what is new because it is unaccustomed, but also those who only propagate what is new because it is 'contemporary', 'modern', and therefore interesting; worshippers of the past and futurists are thus secretly united: according to Franz von Baader, unfulfilled evolution calls forth violent revolution, for matter can only be preserved by continual renewal. But what is worse, he will have as unbidden supporters those who understand by the 'centre' exactly what it militates against, the exposure to the risk of death and evolution, without which the true 'centre' can neither be preserved nor regained. For the 'centre' is not the tepid compromise of extremes, but a mighty and radiant encompassing of them.

If this emotional misconception appears inevitable, even as a result of the loss of the true mean, there is additionally the intellectual misconception of every critic to whom the critical manner and methods of the undertaking have not been clear. For while it is true that the book builds upon the knowledge derived from the history of art and the history of the intellect, the emphasis falls wholly upon a consideration—falsely designated cultural criticism—which must really be a diagnosis from the artistic creations—successful and unsuccessful alike—of the spirit 'of our time'. Whoever views the book on that account as a compendious art history of this period, in spite of the express warning (*Introduction*, pp. 5 and 6, and misses the full worth of the art and the artists therein, merely leaps into a void.

As so many critics have prepared themselves for this fate, it is necessary—even in the roughest fashion—to make it clear what place this method of criticism occupies among the other possible and currently practised ways of considering art, and how the facts of art become a symptom (and frequently a symbol too) of intellectual events that concern us all.

Art definitely consists not of the universal, but of the creation of individual works of art. To evaluate works of art that are genuine creations *exclusively* as symptoms of mental disorder would be doing them a great injustice, yet hardly greater than taking them *exclusively* as examples and transitory points in the development of a style, as the criticism of art on purely stylistic grounds—levelling all differences of quality and worth no less than symptomatic criticism does—has been doing for some long time.[1] Therefore the first method of criticism, and that most suitably adapted to art, is the one which judges the timeless *presence* of the work of art. Its light falls upon all true works of art of all time, whatever language they speak; they enter into a timeless community, the '*musée imaginaire*' of André Malraux.[1] This critical method is that of the lover of art and of the art historian, in so far as these fulfil their primary task, the interpretation of works of art, which is none other than setting them in the contemporary scene.[2] But the true artist can never be as tolerant as this pantheon of art, for his work, even by its very existence, excludes countless other works and admits only a comparatively few blood-relations at their full face-value. To such criticism the book does not contribute (although it has been very much our concern), for it considers no single one of the masterpieces of 'modern' art in full, as a microcosm.

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[1] For this reason Benedetto Croce was always opposed to this type of criticism which in the strictest sense is not art history.

The second method of criticism, which treats art as *past*, as the outcome of a past event, is in the narrower sense historical. It is a broad basic cognition of the newer art history that it is not only possible to establish 'how it happened' (Ranke), but that in what has happened much, and more than might be expected, happens with a kind of inner necessity of events (Alois Riegl). There are significant outlets of 'history' in which the necessary and the accidental are perpetually interwoven in new and particular ways. They occur within the isolated history of art—its fundamental basis being that works of art arise from other works of art.[3] To this theme the book contributes the point that in the preceding two centuries the characteristics of art have been far more consistent than the superficial chaos might lead one to suspect.[4] Admittedly, this is not to be envisaged by the harmonizing concepts of 'style' and 'development'; nowhere has the history of style so broken down as in the understanding of this age. But it would be false to infer from this that the process has no intellectual unity: the principle of its unification, rather as in an explosion, is in disintegration, eccentricity, which of course calls forth further reintegrating powers and movements.[1] If Jacob Burckhardt, looking back on the political situation, could say, 'The storm that shook the world in 1789 still bears upon us', then in art one can go back even further to say that the ideas that came to the surface in the middle of the eighteenth century—earlier in England—by and large animate the events of art up to the present day. What the dominant idea was has yet to be decided. It is certainly only *one* historical perspective among other possible ones, but, it appears to me, one indispensable to the understanding of the age.[2]

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[1] André Malraux, *Psychologie de l'Art.*

[2] Ernesto Grassi has already described the achievements of the interpreters in *Das Problem des Erhabenen* (The Problem of the Sublime).

[3] This principle has been very clearly stated by Malraux.

[4] Hans Sedlmayr, 'Verlust der Mitte—eine Formel und ihr Sinn', in *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für vergleichende Kunstforschung in Wien*, December 1950. Cf. Sedlmayr, 'Die Revolution der modernen Kunst', in *Rowohlts Deutsche Enzkylopädie,* Vol. I (1955, Taschenbuch).

Just as the first two critical methods depend upon each other for their fulfilment, so the second demands a supplementary *intellectual-historical* criticism. For if it is true that art grows by conflict with earlier art—and on this the very independence of art history is based—then every 'art' (every 'tendency', every work) is an acknowledgment of an absolute, not merely through its content but also through its form. The great task of the history of the intellect is to establish the personal *credo* of every work of art and of ever artist (not his private article of faith, but that proclaimed through his art), and to relate what is established to the cognate creeds in literature, philosophy, religion, etc.[3] There is an inestimable amount still to be done in that respect for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Yet spiritual correlations, hitherto hidden, are beginning to come to light: Hogarth's abject pessimism is related to and bound up with Swift and stems from the same religious roots; in the early German landscape gardens the sanctimonious, so Erich Bachmann has perceived, is at work; the apotheosis of geometry by the Revolutionary architects accords with the deistic concept of God as the geometer of the world; in Picasso as in Franz Marc two contrary streams of

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[1] F. Adama van Scheltema also recognizes the movement away from the centre ('*Entmittung*') as the most vital intellectual expression of this age. Cf. *Die Geistige Mitte* (The spiritual Mean), Leipzig, 1947.

[2] I hope to show how many strata occur in this process in my own survey, *Vierzig Aspekte der modernen Kunst.*

[3] Cf. H. Sedlmayr, 'Kunstgeschichte als Geistesgeschichte' (Art History as History of the Mind) in the periodical *Wort und Wahrheit*, Vienna, April 1949.

Romantic mentality are both alive[1]—these are glimpses into expanses of the mind which permit almost unending research.

This method of criticism is, in itself, of no value. To establish that, for instance, surrealism has spiritual affinities with certain 'black' sects of the late Middle Ages is no appraisal, but simply an historical statement, basically not dissimilar to Fraenger's assertion of the intellectual affinity between Hieronymus Bosch and the 'Brethren of the Free Spirit' or 'Adamites'.

The third method of criticism of art is that which refers to the *future*. In art, there are revealed 'both the tendencies and strivings of the soul which have not passed through the consciousness. Before man is in a position to become aware of and formulate notions of the collective powers and aims of a subsequent period of time, art itself has presented (and to me music presents especially) often with surprising liveliness and truth, what is already alive and active as an individual and collective driving force in mankind, although still hidden from the understanding. Art can be the harbinger of the dawn, and equally a warning of darkness and a threatening storm.'[2] Whether whatever it is in works of art that announces the imminent, signifying rise or fall, is to be patronized or resisted, is of course decided on a higher plane, where it is known what brings blessings or calamity to man—not what *could* happen, but what *shall* happen. 'It pleases the cock to crow, but daybreak belongs to God' (Arabian proverb).

Only if these three ways of criticism were fused together would they depict the full 'history'.

The fourth critical way depends upon these three, but transcends them through the introduction of an absolute standard of values. It takes works of art as symptoms of a disturbance in the condition of man, whether individually or collectively. Disturbance, as here used, has only one meaning, and presupposes a norm (which is

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[1] Hans Sedlmayr, 'Kierkegaard on Picasso', *Wort und Wahrheit*, May 1950. Hans Sedlmayr, 'Franz Marc', *ibid.* June, 1951. (Both works consider the intellectual-historical position of the artists, not their artistic achievement.)

[2] G. Révész, *Einführung in die Musikpsychologie* (Introduction to the Psychology of Music), Berne, 1946, in the non-psychological chapter 'The Origins of Music'. This way of criticism is still in its infancy and has as yet no proven methods. But if so thorough a worker as Révész advocates it, this should suffice for it to be taken seriously. It has nothing to do with experimental prophecy.

not the cross-section), an *eternal* '*being*' of mankind. This book diagnoses from the facts of art that the disrupted relationship with God is at the heart of the disturbance. This is asserted as a reality of the history of the mind, for individuals as for the community—a view to which it is difficult to make anyone subscribe if it has not already been revealed to him. Yet this is a thought that emerges independently in the most various fields of research. It is intimated by Alfred Müller-Armack from the facts of economic history, as a consequence of the unfulfilled need for the genuine absolute, which is found in mankind by nature, an occurrence of collective idolatry and the internal 'rivalry of the idols'.[1] It is shown by Wilfried Daim, arising from the facts of depth psychology, that man is to be understood as being open to God, and that when he sets his 'heart' on idols instead of on God, his individual world is distorted and displaced.[2] Walter Rehm, with examples from creative poetry, demonstrates that the characteristic collective spiritual *malaise* of the age, because of disrupted relations with God, breeds anxiety, depression, boredom, despair.[3] This book also shows that in the field of art it is abundantly clear that such phenomena appear historically as might be expected by deduction, inferred on many counts, and even prophesied from the rupture with God.[4] In this way art throws light upon aspects of events that are unseen, or not clearly seen, in other spheres. This is especially so with the event that has distinguished this age from all previous ages and has made it impossible to effect a comparison: the spiritual descent of man into the region of the dead and the chaotic (cf. *ante*, p. 164).[5]

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[1] Alfred Müller-Armack, *Das Jahrhundert ohne Gott* ('The Godless Century'), Munich, 1948.

[2] Wilfried Daim, *Umwertung der Psychoanalyse* ('A New Valuation of Psychoanalysis'), Vienna, 1950. Cf. especially the section 'The structure of spiritual relations with the Absolute and their perversion'.

[3] Walter Rehm, *Experimentum medietatis,* Munich 1947. The '*experimentum medietatis*', according to St Augustine, is the presumptuous attempt of the self-declared autonomous man to be, himself, the 'centre'—or even the mediator. The consequence of this is the 'fall', in Augustine, of course, to the brute, although our experience is that the fall descends lower than that.

[4] These fulfilled prophecies (*e.g.* Schlegel's, Schelling's, Dostoevski's, and others) deserve separate examination.

[5] Erich Voegelin sharply illumines the same process from the other side in *Wissenschaft als Aberglaube* ('Learning as superstition'), in *Wort und Wahrheit,* May 1951.

At the same time it is no untruth that even the severest break with God can turn to salvation. '*Ordo renascendi est crescere posse malis*'; 'The law of regeneration is the ability to grow through evil' (Rutilius Namantianus).

Scientific grounds appear to have been forsaken with this method of criticism, but the truth is, they have been transcended, not abandoned. For whoever cannot and will not accept this thesis can reject it as a heuristic hypothesis on the grounds of scholasticism. I would add this assertion: that the thesis is in a position to explain very much more than all previous experimental explanations of the art of our time.[1] I must not be charged with arrogance on this count, for the thing itself demands this statement.

As little as this fourth, diagnostic way of considering art can and will replace the others, the more it comes into its own among the attempts to understand our age historically and fundamentally. It concerns everyone who experiences 'history' in his own person. 'That "finding within oneself" of an external past event should be both the meaning and aim of every historical study.' (Franz von Baader.) This 'event' demanded and still demands an answer. For in the last analysis the fourth way of criticism is concerned with 'not the wheel of history, but with the axle about which it revolves. It treats of the *centre*.' (Helmut Thielicke.)

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[1] Hans Sedlmayr, 'Die Kunst im Zeitalter des Atheismus' ('Art in the age of atheism'), in *Das Münster*, May, June 1950. Additionally, Reinhard Lauth, *Die Frage nach dem Sinn des Daseins* ('The question of the meaning of existence'), Munich, 1953.

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